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THE

COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS

OF

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

IN EIGHT PARTS

THE

COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS

OF

PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

THE TEXT NEWLY COLLATED AND REVISED
AND EDITED WITH A MEMOIR
AND NOTES BY

GEORGE EDWARD WOODBERRY

VOLUME THIRD

PART ONE

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ŒDIPUS TYRANNUS

OR

SWELLFOOT THE TYRANT

A TRAGEDY

IN TWO ACTS

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL DORIC

——— Choose Reform or Civil War,
When through thy streets, instead of hare with dogs,
A CONSORT-QUEEN shall hunt a KING with hogs,
Riding on the IONIAN MINOTAUR.

Œdipus Tyrannus was published, without Shelley's name, at London, in 1820, under the imprint of C. F. Seyfang, for the author, by J. Johnston, Cheapside. The drama was begun, under the circumstances described in Mrs. Shelley's Note, August 24, 1819, at the Baths of San Giuliano, near Pisa. It was sent to Horace Smith, who employed the publisher. It was threatened with prosecution by citizens of the ward, and some steps thereto seem to have been taken; but at the suggestion of Alderman Rothwell the publisher gave up the whole edition, except seven copies, which had been sold, and also told the name of his employer. The secret of the authorship was kept by Horace Smith, who said only that the work had been sent to him from Pisa. The drama was suggested by the affair of Queen Caroline. Of the characters Purganax stands for Lord Castlereagh, Dakry for Lord Eldon, and Laoctonos for the Duke of Wellington.

ADVERTISEMENT

This Tragedy is one of a triad or system of three Plays (an arrangement according to which the Greeks were accustomed to connect their dramatic representations) elucidating the wonderful and appalling fortunes of the Swellfoot dynasty. It was evidently written by some *learned Theban;* and, from its characteristic dulness, apparently before the duties on the importation of *Attic salt* had been repealed by the Bœotarchs. The tenderness with which he treats the Pigs proves him to have been a *sus Bœotiæ;* possibly *Epicuri de grege porcus;* for, as the poet observes,

"A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind."

No liberty has been taken with the translation of this remarkable piece of antiquity except the suppressing a seditious and blasphemous Chorus of the Pigs and Bulls at the last act. The word Hoydipouse (or more properly Œdipus), has been rendered literally Swellfoot without its having been conceived necessary to determine whether a swelling of the hind or the fore feet of the Swinish Monarch is particularly indicated.

Should the remaining portions of this Tragedy be found, entitled *Swellfoot in Angaria* and *Charité*, the Translator might be tempted to give them to the reading Public.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

Tyrant Swellfoot, King of Thebes.
Iona Taurina, his Queen.
Mammon, Arch-Priest of Famine.
Purganax, Dakry, Laoctonos } Wizards, Ministers of Swellfoot.

The Gadfly.
The Leech.
The Rat.
The Minotaur.
Moses, the Sow-gelder.
Solomon, the Porkman.
Zephaniah, Pig-butcher.

Chorus of the Swinish Multitude.
Guards, Attendants, Priests, etc., etc.

Scene. Thebes.

ŒDIPUS TYRANNUS

ACT I

SCENE — *A magnificent Temple, built of thigh-bones and death's-heads, and tiled with scalps. Over the Altar the statue of Famine, veiled; a number of boars, sows and sucking-pigs, crowned with thistle, shamrock and oak, sitting on the steps and clinging round the Altar of the Temple.*

Enter SWELLFOOT, *in his royal robes, without perceiving the Pigs.*

SWELLFOOT

THOU supreme goddess! by whose power divine
These graceful limbs are clothed in proud array
[*He contemplates himself with satisfaction.*
Of gold and purple, and this kingly paunch
Swells like a sail before a favoring breeze,
And these most sacred nether promontories
Lie satisfied with layers of fat; and these
Bœotian cheeks, like Egypt's pyramid,
(Nor with less toil were their foundations laid)
Sustain the cone of my untroubled brain,
That point, the emblem of a pointless nothing!
Thou to whom Kings and laurelled Emperors,
Radical-butchers, Paper-money-millers,
Bishops and deacons, and the entire army
Of those fat martyrs to the persecution
Of stifling turtle-soup and brandy-devils,

Offer their secret vows! thou plenteous Ceres
Of their Eleusis, hail!

SWINE

Eigh! eigh! eigh! eigh!

SWELLFOOT

Ha! what are ye,
Who, crowned with leaves devoted to the Furies,
Cling round this sacred shrine?

SWINE

Aigh! aigh! aigh!

SWELLFOOT

What! ye that are
The very beasts that, offered at her altar
With blood and groans, salt-cake, and fat, and inwards,
Ever propitiate her reluctant will
When taxes are withheld?

SWINE

Ugh! ugh! ugh!

SWELLFOOT

What! ye who grub
With filthy snouts my red potatoes up
In Allan's rushy bog? who eat the oats
Up, from my cavalry in the Hebrides?
Who swill the hog-wash soup my cooks digest
From bones, and rags, and scraps of shoe-leather,
Which should be given to cleaner Pigs than you?

SEMICHORUS I OF SWINE

The same, alas! the same;
Though only now the name
Of Pig remains to me.

SEMICHORUS II OF SWINE

If 'twere your kingly will
Us wretched Swine to kill,
What should we yield to thee?

SWELLFOOT

Why, skin and bones, and some few hairs for mortar.

CHORUS OF SWINE

I have heard your Laureate sing
That pity was a royal thing;
Under your mighty ancestors we Pigs
Were blessed as nightingales on myrtle sprigs
Or grasshoppers that live on noonday dew,
And sung, old annals tell, as sweetly too;
But now our sties are fallen in, we catch
The murrain and the mange, the scab and itch;
Sometimes your royal dogs tear down our thatch,
And then we seek the shelter of a ditch;
Hog-wash or grains, or rutabaga, none
Has yet been ours since your reign begun.

FIRST SOW

My Pigs, 'tis in vain to tug.

SECOND SOW

I could almost eat my litter.

FIRST PIG

I suck, but no milk will come from the dug.

SECOND PIG

Our skin and our bones would be bitter.

BOARS

We fight for this rag of greasy rug,
Though a trough of wash would be fitter.

SEMICHORUS

Happier Swine were they than we,
Drowned in the Gadarean sea!
I wish that pity would drive out the devils
Which in your royal bosom hold their revels,
And sink us in the waves of thy compassion!
Alas, the Pigs are an unhappy nation!
Now if your Majesty would have our bristles
To bind your mortar with, or fill our colons
With rich blood, or make brawn out of our gristles,
In policy — ask else your royal Solons —
You ought to give us hog-wash and clean straw,
And sties well thatched; besides, it is the law!

SWELLFOOT

This is sedition, and rank blasphemy!
Ho! there, my guards!

Enter a GUARD

GUARD

Your sacred Majesty.

SWELLFOOT

Call in the Jews, Solomon the court Porkman,
Moses the Sow-gelder, and Zephaniah
The Hog-butcher.

GUARD

They are in waiting, Sire.

Enter SOLOMON, MOSES, *and* ZEPHANIAH

SWELLFOOT

Out with your knife, old Moses, and spay those Sows

[*The Pigs run about in consternation.*

That load the earth with Pigs; cut close and deep.
Moral restraint I see has no effect,
Nor prostitution, nor our own example,
Starvation, typhus-fever, war, nor prison.
This was the art which the arch-priest of Famine
Hinted at in his charge to the Theban clergy.
Cut close and deep, good Moses.

MOSES

Let your Majesty
Keep the Boars quiet, else —

SWELLFOOT

Zephaniah, cut
That fat Hog's throat, the brute seems overfed;
Seditious hunks! to whine for want of grains!

ZEPHANIAH

Your sacred Majesty, he has the dropsy.
We shall find pints of hydatids in 's liver;
He has not half an inch of wholesome fat
Upon his carious ribs —

SWELLFOOT

'Tis all the same.
He'll serve instead of riot-money, when
Our murmuring troops bivouac in Thebes' streets;
And January winds, after a day
Of butchering, will make them relish carrion.
Now, Solomon, I'll sell you in a lump
The whole kit of them.

SOLOMON

Why, your Majesty,
I could not give —

SWELLFOOT

Kill them out of the way —
That shall be price enough; and let me hear
Their everlasting grunts and whines no more!

[*Exeunt, driving in the Swine.*

Enter MAMMON, *the Arch-Priest; and* PURGANAX, *Chief of the Council of Wizards*

PURGANAX

The future looks as black as death; a cloud,
Dark as the frown of Hell, hangs over it.
The troops grow mutinous, the revenue fails,
There's something rotten in us; for the level
Of the state slopes, its very bases topple;
The boldest turn their backs upon themselves!

MAMMON

Why, what's the matter, my dear fellow, now?
Do the troops mutiny? — decimate some regiments.
Does money fail? — come to my mint — coin paper,

Till gold be at a discount, and, ashamed
To show his bilious face, go purge himself,
In emulation of her vestal whiteness.

PURGANAX

Oh, would that this were all! The oracle!!

MAMMON

Why it was I who spoke that oracle,
And whether I was dead-drunk or inspired
I cannot well remember; nor, in truth,
The oracle itself!

PURGANAX

The words went thus:
" Bœotia, choose reform or civil war,
When through thy streets, instead of hare with dogs,
A Consort-Queen shall hunt a King with hogs,
Riding on the Ionian Minotaur."

MAMMON

Now if the oracle had ne'er foretold
This sad alternative, it must arrive,
Or not, and so it must now that it has;
And whether I was urged by grace divine
Or Lesbian liquor to declare these words,
Which must, as all words must, be false or true,
It matters not; for the same power made all,
Oracle, wine, and me and you — or none —
'Tis the same thing. If you knew as much
Of oracles as I do —

125 *you knew* || *you but knew*, Rossetti.

PURGANAX

You arch-priests
Believe in nothing; if you were to dream
Of a particular number in the lottery,
You would not buy the ticket!

MAMMON

Yet our tickets
Are seldom blanks. But what steps have you taken?
For prophecies, when once they get abroad,
Like liars who tell the truth to serve their ends,
Or hypocrites, who, from assuming virtue,
Do the same actions that the virtuous do,
Contrive their own fulfilment. This Iona —
Well — you know what the chaste Pasiphaë did,
Wife to that most religious King of Crete,
And still how popular the tale is here;
And these dull Swine of Thebes boast their descent
From the free Minotaur. You know they still
Call themselves Bulls, though thus degenerate;
And everything relating to a Bull
Is popular and respectable in Thebes;
Their arms are seven Bulls in a field gules;
They think their strength consists in eating beef;
Now there were danger in the precedent
If Queen Iona —

PURGANAX

I have taken good care
That shall not be. I struck the crust o' the earth
With this enchanted rod, and Hell lay bare!
And from a cavern full of ugly shapes,
I chose a Leech, a Gadfly, and a Rat.

The gadfly was the same which Juno sent
To agitate Io, and which Ezekiel mentions
That the Lord whistled for out of the mountains
Of utmost Æthiopia to torment
Mesopotamian Babylon. The beast
Has a loud trumpet like the Scarabee;
His crookèd tail is barbed with many stings,
Each able to make a thousand wounds, and each
Immedicable; from his convex eyes
He sees fair things in many hideous shapes,
And trumpets all his falsehood to the world.
Like other beetles he is fed on dung;
He has eleven feet with which he crawls,
Trailing a blistering slime; and this foul beast
Has tracked Iona from the Theban limits,
From isle to isle, from city unto city,
Urging her flight from the far Chersonese
To fabulous Solyma and the Ætnean Isle,
Ortygia, Melite, and Calypso's Rock,
And the swart tribes of Garamant and Fez,
Æolia and Elysium, and thy shores,
Parthenope, which now, alas! are free!
And through the fortunate Saturnian land
Into the darkness of the West.

MAMMON

But if
This Gadfly should drive Iona hither?

PURGANAX

Gods! what an *if!* but there is my gray Rat,
So thin with want he can crawl in and out

176 *This Gadfly of yours* or *should but*, Rossetti conj. *Queen Iona*, Forman conj.

Of any narrow chink and filthy hole,
And he shall creep into her dressing-room,
And —

MAMMON

My dear friend, where are your wits? as if
She does not always toast a piece of cheese,
And bait the trap? and rats, when lean enough
To crawl through *such* chinks —

PURGANAX

But my Leech — a leech
Fit to suck blood, with lubricous round rings,
Capaciously expatiative, which make
His little body like a red balloon,
As full of blood as that of hydrogen,
Sucked from men's hearts; insatiably he sucks
And clings and pulls — a horse-leech whose deep maw
The plethoric King Swellfoot could not fill,
And who, till full, will cling forever.

MAMMON

This
For Queen Iona might suffice, and less;
But 'tis the Swinish multitude I fear,
And in that fear I have —

PURGANAX

Done what?

MAMMON

Disinherited
My eldest son Chrysaor, because he

Attended public meetings, and would always
Stand prating there of commerce, public faith,
Economy, and unadulterate coin,
And other topics, ultra-radical;
And have entailed my estate, called the Fool's Paradise,
And funds in fairy-money, bonds, and bills,
Upon my accomplished daughter Banknotina,
And married her to the Gallows.

PURGANAX

A good match!

MAMMON

A high connection, Purganax. The bridegroom
Is of a very ancient family,
Of Hounslow Heath, Tyburn, and the New Drop,
And has great influence in both Houses. Oh,
He makes the fondest husband; nay, *too* fond —
New married people should not kiss in public;
But the poor souls love one another so!
And then my little grandchildren, the Gibbets,
Promising children as you ever saw, —
The young playing at hanging, the elder learning
How to hold radicals. They are well taught too,
For every Gibbet says its catechism,
And reads a select chapter in the Bible
Before it goes to play.

(*A most tremendous humming is heard*)

PURGANAX

Ha! what do I hear?

Enter the GADFLY

MAMMON

Your Gadfly, as it seems, is tired of gadding.

GADFLY

Hum, hum, hum!
From the lakes of the Alps and the cold gray scalps
Of the mountains, I come!
Hum, hum, hum!
From Morocco and Fez, and the high palaces
Of golden Byzantium;
From the temples divine of old Palestine,
From Athens and Rome,
With a ha! and a hum!
I come, I come!

All inn-doors and windows
Were open to me;
I saw all that sin does,
Which lamps hardly see
That burn in the night by the curtained bed —
The impudent lamps! for they blushed not red.
Dinging and singing,
From slumber I rung her,
Loud as the clank of an ironmonger;
Hum, hum, hum!

Far, far, far,
With the trump of my lips and the sting at my hips,
I drove her — afar!
Far, far, far,
From city to city, abandoned of pity,

A ship without needle or star;
Homeless she passed, like a cloud on the blast,
Seeking peace, finding war;
She is here in her car,
From afar, and afar.
Hum, hum!

I have stung her and wrung her!
The venom is working;
And if you had hung her
With canting and quirking,
She could not be deader than she will be soon;
I have driven her close to you, under the moon,
Night and day, hum, hum, ha!
I have hummed her and drummed her
From place to place, till at last I have dumbed her,
Hum, hum, hum!

Enter the LEECH *and the* RAT

LEECH

I will suck
Blood or muck!
The disease of the state is a plethory,
Who so fit to reduce it as I?

RAT

I'll slyly seize and
Let blood from her weasand, —
Creeping through crevice, and chink, and cranny,
With my snaky tail, and my sides so scranny.

PURGANAX

Aroint ye, thou unprofitable worm!

(*To the* LEECH)

And thou, dull beetle, get thee back to hell,

(*To the* GADFLY)

To sting the ghosts of Babylonian kings,
And the ox-headed Io.

SWINE (*within*)

Ugh, ugh, ugh!
Hail, Iona the divine!
We will be no longer Swine,
But Bulls with horns and dewlaps.

RAT

For,
You know, my lord, the Minotaur —

PURGANAX (*fiercely*)

Be silent! get to hell! or I will call
The cat out of the kitchen. Well, Lord Mammon,
This is a pretty business!

[*Exit the* RAT.

MAMMON

I will go
And spell some scheme to make it ugly then.

[*Exit.*

Enter SWELLFOOT

SWELLFOOT

She is returned! Taurina is in Thebes
When Swellfoot wishes that she were in hell!
O Hymen! clothed in yellow jealousy
And waving o'er the couch of wedded kings
The torch of Discord with its fiery hair —

This is thy work, thou patron saint of queens!
Swellfoot is wived! though parted by the sea,
The very name of wife had conjugal rights;
Her cursed image ate, drank, slept with me,
And in the arms of Adiposa oft
Her memory has received a husband's —

(*A loud tumult, and cries of* "IONA FOREVER! — NO SWELLFOOT!")

SWELLFOOT

Hark!
How the Swine cry Iona Taurina!
I suffer the real presence. Purganax,
Off with her head!

PURGANAX

But I must first impanel
A jury of the Pigs.

SWELLFOOT

Pack them then.

PURGANAX

Or fattening some few in two separate sties,
And giving them clean straw, tying some bits
Of ribbon round their legs — giving their Sows
Some tawdry lace and bits of lustre glass,
And their young Boars white and red rags, and tails
Of cows, and jay feathers, and sticking cauliflowers
Between the ears of the old ones; and when
They are persuaded that, by the inherent virtue
Of these things, they are all imperial Pigs,
Good Lord! they'd rip each other's bellies up,
Not to say help us in destroying her.

295 *Go pack*, Rossetti conj.; *Well, pack*, Forman conj.

SWELLFOOT

This plan might be tried too. Where's General
Laoctonos?

Enter LAOCTONOS

It is my royal pleasure
That you, Lord General, bring the head and body,
If separate it would please me better, hither
Of Queen Iona.

LAOCTONOS

That pleasure I well knew,
And made a charge with those battalions bold,
Called, from their dress and grin, the Royal Apes,
Upon the Swine, who in a hollow square
Enclosed her, and received the first attack
Like so many rhinoceroses, and then
Retreating in good order, with bare tusks
And wrinkled snouts presented to the foe,
Bore her in triumph to the public sty.
What is still worse, some Sows upon the ground
Have given the Ape-guards apples, nuts and gin,
And they all whisk their tails aloft, and cry,
"Long live Iona! down with Swellfoot!"

PURGANAX

Hark.

THE SWINE (*without*)

Long live Iona! down with Swellfoot!

Enter DAKRY

DAKRY

I
Went to the garret of the Swineherd's tower,

Which overlooks the sty, and made a long
Harangue (all words) to the assembled Swine,
Of delicacy, mercy, judgment, law,
Morals, and precedents, and purity,
Adultery, destitution, and divorce,
Piety, faith, and state necessity,
And how I loved the Queen! — and then I wept
With the pathos of my own eloquence,
And every tear turned to a mill-stone, which
Brained many a gaping Pig, and there was made
A slough of blood and brains upon the place,
Greased with the pounded bacon; round and round
The millstones rolled, ploughing the pavement up,
And hurling sucking Pigs into the air,
With dust and stones.

Enter MAMMON

MAMMON

I wonder that gray wizards
Like you should be so beardless in their schemes;
It had been but a point of policy
To keep Iona and the Swine apart.
Divide and rule! but ye have made a junction
Between two parties who will govern you,
But for my art. — Behold this Bag! it is
The poison Bag of that Green Spider huge,
On which our spies skulked in ovation through
The streets of Thebes, when they were paved with dead:
A bane so much the deadlier fills it now
As calumny is worse than death; for here
The Gadfly's venom, fifty times distilled,
Is mingled with the vomit of the Leech,

In due proportion, and black ratsbane, which
That very Rat, who, like the Pontic tyrant,
Nurtures himself on poison, dare not touch.
All is sealed up with the broad seal of Fraud,
Who is the Devil's Lord High Chancellor,
And over it the Primate of all Hell
Murmured this pious baptism: — "Be thou called
The Green Bag; and this power and grace be thine:
That thy contents, on whomsoever poured,
Turn innocence to guilt, and gentlest looks
To savage, foul, and fierce deformity;
Let all baptized by thy infernal dew
Be called adulterer, drunkard, liar, wretch!
No name left out which orthodoxy loves,
Court Journal or legitimate Review!
Be they called tyrant, beast, fool, glutton, lover
Of other wives and husbands than their own —
The heaviest sin on this side of the Alps!
Wither they to a ghastly caricature
Of what was human! — let not man or beast
Behold their face with unaverted eyes,
Or hear their names with ears that tingle not
With blood of indignation, rage, and shame!"
This is a perilous liquor, good my Lords.

[SWELLFOOT *approaches to touch the Green Bag.*

Beware! for God's sake, beware! — if you should break
The seal, and touch the fatal liquor —

PURGANAX

There,
Give it to me. I have been used to handle

All sorts of poisons. His dread Majesty
Only desires to see the color of it.

MAMMON

Now, with a little common sense, my Lords,
Only undoing all that has been done,
(Yet so as it may seem we but confirm it)
Our victory is assured. We must entice
Her Majesty from the sty, and make the Pigs
Believe that the contents of the Green Bag
Are the true test of guilt or innocence;
And that, if she be guilty, 'twill transform her
To manifest deformity like guilt;
If innocent, she will become transfigured
Into an angel, such as they say she is;
And they will see her flying through the air,
So bright that she will dim the noonday sun,
Showering down blessings in the shape of comfits.
This, trust a priest, is just the sort of thing
Swine will believe. I'll wager you will see them
Climbing upon the thatch of their low sties,
With pieces of smoked glass, to watch her sail
Among the clouds, and some will hold the flaps
Of one another's ears between their teeth,
To catch the coming hail of comfits in.
You, Purganax, who have the gift o' the gab,
Make them a solemn speech to this effect.
I go to put in readiness the feast
Kept to the honor of our goddess Famine,
Where, for more glory, let the ceremony
Take place of the uglification of the Queen.

DAKRY (*to* SWELLFOOT)

I, as the keeper of your sacred conscience,
Humbly remind your Majesty that the care
Of your high office, as Man-milliner
To red Bellona, should not be deferred.

PURGANAX

All part, in happier plight to meet again.

[*Exeunt.*

ACT II.

SCENE I. — *The Public Sty. The Boars in full Assembly.*

Enter PURGANAX

PURGANAX

GRANT me your patience, Gentlemen and Boars,
Ye, by whose patience under public burdens
The glorious constitution of these sties
Subsists, and shall subsist. The Lean-Pig rates
Grow with the growing populace of Swine;
The taxes, that true source of Piggishness,
(How can I find a more appropriate term
To include religion, morals, peace and plenty,
And all that fit Bœotia as a nation
To teach the other nations how to live?)
Increase with Piggishness itself; and still
Does the revenue, that great spring of all
The patronage, and pensions, and by-payments,
Which free-born Pigs regard with jealous eyes,
Diminish, till at length, by glorious steps,
All the land's produce will be merged in taxes,
And the revenue will amount to —— nothing!
The failure of a foreign market for
Sausages, bristles, and blood-puddings,
And such home manufactures, is but partial;
And, that the population of the Pigs,
Instead of hog-wash, has been fed on straw
And water, is a fact which is — you know —
That is — it is a state necessity —

Temporary, of course. Those impious Pigs,
Who, by frequent squeaks, have dared impugn
The settled Swellfoot system, or to make
Irreverent mockery of the genuflexions
Inculcated by the arch-priest, have been whipped
Into a loyal and an orthodox whine.
Things being in this happy state, the Queen
Iona ——

(*A loud cry from the Pigs*)

She is innocent, most innocent!

PURGANAX

That is the very thing that I was saying,
Gentlemen Swine; the Queen Iona being
Most innocent, no doubt, returns to Thebes,
And the lean Sows and Boars collect about her,
Wishing to make her think that *we* believe
(I mean those more substantial Pigs who swill
Rich hog-wash, while the others mouth damp straw)
That she is guilty; thus, the Lean-Pig faction
Seeks to obtain that hog-wash, which has been
Your immemorial right, and which I will
Maintain you in to the last drop of —

A BOAR (*interrupting him*)

What
Does any one accuse her of?

PURGANAX

Why, no one
Makes *any* positive accusation; but
There were hints dropped, and so the privy wizards

26 *by frequent* || *by their frequent*, Forman conj., Rossetti.

Conceived that it became them to advise
His Majesty to investigate their truth;
Not for his own sake; he could be content
To let his wife play any pranks she pleased,
If, by that sufferance, *he* could please the Pigs;
But then he fears the morals of the Swine,
The Sows especially, and what effect
It might produce upon the purity and
Religion of the rising generation
Of sucking Pigs, if it could be suspected
That Queen Iona — (*A pause*)

FIRST BOAR

Well, go on; we long
To hear what she can possibly have done.

PURGANAX

Why, it is hinted, that a certain Bull —
Thus much is *known:* — the milk-white Bulls that feed
Beside Clitumnus and the crystal lakes
Of the Cisalpine mountains, in fresh dews
Of lotus-grass and blossoming asphodel
Sleeking their silken hair, and with sweet breath
Loading the mourning winds until they faint
With living fragrance, are so beautiful!
Well, *I* say nothing; but Europa rode
On such a one from Asia into Crete,
And the enamoured sea grew calm beneath
His gliding beauty. And Pasiphaë,
Iona's grandmother, —— but *she* is innocent!
And that both you and I, and all assert.

FIRST BOAR

Most innocent!

PURGANAX

Behold this Bag; a Bag —

SECOND BOAR

Oh! no Green Bags!! Jealousy's eyes are green,
Scorpions are green, and water-snakes, and efts,
And verdigris, and —

PURGANAX

Honorable Swine,
In Piggish souls can prepossessions reign?
Allow me to remind you, grass is green —
All flesh is grass; no bacon but is flesh —
Ye are but bacon. This divining Bag
(Which is not green, but only bacon color)
Is filled with liquor, which if sprinkled o'er
A woman guilty of — we all know what —
Makes her so hideous, till she finds one blind
She never can commit the like again;
If innocent, she will turn into an angel
And rain down blessings in the shape of comfits
As she flies up to heaven. Now, my proposal
Is to convert her sacred Majesty
Into an angel (as I am sure we shall do),
By pouring on her head this mystic water.
[*Showing the Bag.*
I know that she is innocent; I wish
Only to prove her so to all the world.

FIRST BOAR

Excellent, just, and noble Purganax!

SECOND BOAR

How glorious it will be to see her Majesty
Flying above our heads, her petticoats
Streaming like — like — like —

THIRD BOAR

Anything.

PURGANAX

Oh, no!
But like a standard of an admiral's ship,
Or like the banner of a conquering host,
Or like a cloud dyed in the dying day,
Unravelled on the blast from a white mountain;
Or like a meteor, or a war-steed's mane,
Or waterfall from a dizzy precipice
Scattered upon the wind.

FIRST BOAR

Or a cow's tail, —

SECOND BOAR

Or *anything*, as the learned Boar observed.

PURGANAX

Gentlemen Boars, I move a resolution,
That her most sacred Majesty should be
Invited to attend the feast of Famine,
And to receive upon her chaste white body
Dews of apotheosis from this Bag.

[*A great confusion is heard, of the Pigs out of Doors, which communicates itself to those within. During the first strophe, the doors of the sty are staved in, and a number of exceedingly lean Pigs and Sows and Boars rush in.*

SEMICHORUS I

No! Yes!

SEMICHORUS II

Yes! No!

SEMICHORUS I

A law!

SEMICHORUS II

A flaw!

SEMICHORUS I

Porkers, we shall lose our wash,
Or must share it with the Lean-Pigs!

FIRST BOAR

Order! order! be not rash!
Was there ever such a scene, Pigs!

AN OLD SOW (*rushing in*)

I never saw so fine a dash
Since I first began to wean Pigs.

SECOND BOAR (*solemnly*)

The Queen will be an angel time enough.
I vote, in form of an amendment, that
Purganax rub a little of that stuff
Upon his face —

PURGANAX (*his heart is seen to beat through his waistcoat*)

Gods! What would ye be at?

SEMICHORUS I

Purganax has plainly shown a
Cloven foot and jackdaw feather.

SEMICHORUS II

I vote Swellfoot and Iona
Try the magic test together;
Whenever royal spouses bicker,
Both should try the magic liquor.

AN OLD BOAR (*aside*)

A miserable state is that of Pigs,
For if their drivers would tear caps and wigs,
The Swine must bite each other's ear therefor.

AN OLD SOW (*aside*)

A wretched lot Jove has assigned to Swine,
Squabbling makes Pig-herds hungry, and they dine
On bacon, and whip sucking Pigs the more.

CHORUS

Hog-wash has been ta'en away;
If the Bull-Queen is divested,
We shall be in every way
Hunted, stripped, exposed, molested;
Let us do whate'er we may,
That she shall not be arrested.

Queen, we entrench you with walls of brawn,
And palisades of tusks, sharp as a bayonet.
Place your most Sacred Person here. We pawn
Our lives that none a finger dare to lay on it.
Those who wrong you, wrong us;
Those who hate you, hate us;
Those who sting you, sting us;
Those who bait you, bait us;
The *oracle* is now about to be
Fulfilled by circumvolving destiny,
Which says: "Thebes, choose reform or civil war,
When through your streets, instead of hare with dogs,
A Consort-Queen shall hunt a King with hogs,
Riding upon the Ionian Minotaur."

Enter IONA TAURINA

IONA TAURINA (*coming forward*)

Gentlemen Swine, and gentle Lady-Pigs,
The tender heart of every Boar acquits
Their Queen of any act incongruous
With native Piggishness, and she reposing
With confidence upon the grunting nation,
Has thrown herself, her cause, her life, her all,
Her innocence, into their Hoggish arms;
Nor has the expectation been deceived
Of finding shelter there. Yet know, great Boars,
(For such whoever lives among you finds you,
And so do I) the innocent are proud!
I have accepted your protection only
In compliment of your kind love and care,
Not for necessity. The innocent
Are safest there where trials and dangers wait;

Innocent queens o'er white-hot ploughshares tread
Unsinged; and ladies, Erin's laureate sings it,
Decked with rare gems, and beauty rarer still,
Walked from Killarney to the Giant's Causeway
Through rebels, smugglers, troops of yeomanry,
White-boys, and Orange-boys, and constables,
Tithe-proctors, and excise people, uninjured!
Thus I!—
Lord Purganax, I do commit myself
Into your custody, and am prepared
To stand the test, whatever it may be!

PURGANAX

This magnanimity in your sacred Majesty
Must please the Pigs. You cannot fail of being
A heavenly angel. Smoke your bits of glass,
Ye loyal Swine, or her transfiguration
Will blind your wondering eyes.

AN OLD BOAR (*aside*)

Take care, my Lord,
They do not smoke you first.

PURGANAX

At the approaching feast
Of Famine let the expiation be.

SWINE

Content! content!

IONA TAURINA (*aside*)

I, most content of all,
Know that my foes even thus prepare their fall!

[*Exeunt omnes.*

SCENE II. — *The interior of the Temple of Famine. The statue of the Goddess, a skeleton clothed in party-colored rags, seated upon a heap of skulls and loaves intermingled. A number of exceedingly fat Priests in black garments arrayed on each side, with marrow-bones and cleavers in their hands. A flourish of trumpets.*

Enter MAMMON *as Arch-priest*, SWELLFOOT, DAKRY, PURGANAX, LAOCTONOS, *followed by* IONA TAURINA *guarded. On the other side enter the Swine.*

CHORUS OF PRIESTS (*accompanied by the Court Porkman on marrow-bones and cleavers*)

Goddess bare, and gaunt, and pale,
Empress of the world, all hail!
What though Cretans old called thee
City-crested Cybele?
We call thee Famine!
Goddess of fasts and feasts, starving and cramming;
Through thee, for emperors, kings and priests and lords,
Who rule by viziers, sceptres, bank-notes, words,
The earth pours forth its plenteous fruits,
Corn, wool, linen, flesh, and roots.
Those who consume these fruits through thee grow fat,
Those who produce these fruits through thee grow lean,
Whatever change takes place, oh, stick to that,
And let things be as they have ever been;
At least while we remain thy priests,
And proclaim thy fasts and feasts!
Through thee the sacred Swellfoot dynasty

Is based upon a rock amid that sea
Whose waves are Swine — so let it ever be!

[SWELLFOOT, *etc., seat themselves at a table, magnificently covered, at the upper end of the temple. Attendants pass over the stage with hog-wash in pails. A number of Pigs, exceedingly lean, follow them, licking up the wash.*

MAMMON

I fear your sacred Majesty has lost
The appetite which you were used to have.
Allow me now to recommend this dish —
A simple kickshaw by your Persian cook,
Such as is served at the great King's second table.
The price and pains which its ingredients cost
Might have maintained some dozen families
A winter or two — not more — so plain a dish
Could scarcely disagree.

SWELLFOOT

After the trial,
And these fastidious Pigs are gone, perhaps
I may recover my lost appetite.
I feel the gout flying about my stomach;
Give me a glass of Maraschino punch.

PURGANAX (*filling his glass, and standing up*)

The glorious constitution of the Pigs!

ALL

A toast! a toast! stand up, and three times three!

DAKRY

No heel-taps — darken day-lights!

LAOCTONOS

Claret, somehow,
Puts me in mind of blood, and blood of claret!

SWELLFOOT

Laoctonos is fishing for a compliment;
But 'tis his due. Yes, you have drunk more wine,
And shed more blood, than any man in Thebes.
(*To* PURGANAX)
For God's sake stop the grunting of those Pigs!

PURGANAX

We dare not, Sire! 'tis Famine's privilege.

CHORUS OF SWINE

Hail to thee, hail to thee, Famine!
Thy throne is on blood, and thy robe is of rags;
Thou devil which livest on damning;
Saint of new churches and cant, and Green Bags;
Till in pity and terror thou risest,
Confounding the schemes of the wisest;
When thou liftest thy skeleton form,
When the loaves and the skulls roll about,
We will greet thee — the voice of a storm
Would be lost in our terrible shout!

Then hail to thee, hail to thee, Famine!
Hail to thee, Empress of Earth!
When thou risest, dividing possessions,
When thou risest, uprooting oppressions,
In the pride of thy ghastly mirth;
Over palaces, temples, and graves

We will rush as thy minister-slaves,
Trampling behind in thy train,
Till all be made level again!

MAMMON

I hear a crackling of the giant bones
Of the dread image, and in the black pits
Which once were eyes, I see two livid flames.
These prodigies are oracular, and show
The presence of the unseen Deity.
Mighty events are hastening to their doom!

SWELLFOOT

I only hear the lean and mutinous Swine
Grunting about the temple.

DAKRY

In a crisis
Of such exceeding delicacy, I think
We ought to put her Majesty, the Queen,
Upon her trial without delay.

MAMMON

The Bag
Is here.

PURGANAX

I have rehearsed the entire scene
With an ox-bladder and some ditch-water,
On Lady P——; it cannot fail.
[*Taking up the Bag.*
Your Majesty
(*To* SWELLFOOT)
In such a filthy business had better

Stand on one side, lest it should sprinkle you.
A spot or two on me would do no harm;
Nay, it might hide the blood, which the sad genius
Of the Green Isle has fixed, as by a spell,
Upon my brow — which would stain all its seas,
But which those seas could never wash away!

IONA TAURINA

My Lord, I am ready — nay, I am impatient,
To undergo the test.

[*A graceful figure in a semi-transparent veil passes unnoticed through the Temple; the word* LIBERTY *is seen through the veil, as if it were written in fire upon its forehead. Its words are almost drowned in the furious grunting of the Pigs, and the business of the trial. She kneels on the steps of the Altar, and speaks in tones at first faint and low, but which ever become louder and louder.*

LIBERTY

Mighty Empress, Death's white wife,
Ghastly mother-in-law of life!
By the God who made thee such,
By the magic of thy touch,
By the starving and the cramming
Of fasts and feasts! — by thy dread self, O Famine!
I charge thee, when thou wake the multitude,
Thou lead them not upon the paths of blood.
The earth did never mean her foison
For those who crown life's cup with poison
Of fanatic rage and meaningless revenge;
But for those radiant spirits, who are still
The standard-bearers in the van of Change.
Be they th' appointed stewards, to fill
The lap of Pain, and Toil, and Age!
Remit, O Queen! thy accustomed rage!

Be what thou art not! In voice faint and
low
Freedom calls Famine, her eternal foe,
To brief alliance, hollow truce. — Rise now!

[*Whilst the veiled figure has been chanting the strophe,* MAMMON, DAKRY, LAOCTONOS *and* SWELLFOOT *have surrounded* IONA TAURINA, *who, with her hands folded on her breast and her eyes lifted to Heaven, stands, as with saint-like resignation, to wait the issue of the business in perfect confidence of her innocence.*

PURGANAX, *after unsealing the Green Bag, is gravely about to pour the liquor upon her head, when suddenly the whole expression of her figure and countenance changes; she snatches it from his hand with a loud laugh of triumph, and empties it over* SWELLFOOT *and his whole Court, who are instantly changed into a number of filthy and ugly animals, and rush out of the Temple. The image of Famine then arises with a tremendous sound, the Pigs begin scrambling for the loaves, and are tripped up by the skulls; all those who eat the loaves are turned into Bulls, and arrange themselves quietly behind the altar. The image of Famine sinks through a chasm in the earth, and a* MINOTAUR *rises.*

MINOTAUR

I am the Ionian Minotaur, the mightiest
Of all Europa's taurine progeny;
I am the old traditional Man-Bull;
And from my ancestors having been Ionian
I am called Ion, which, by interpretation,
Is John; in plain Theban, that is to say,
My name's John Bull; I am a famous hunter,
And can leap any gate in all Bœotia,
Even the palings of the royal park
Or double ditch about the new enclosures;
And if your Majesty will deign to mount me,
At least till you have hunted down your game,
I will not throw you.

IONA TAURINA

[*During this speech she has been putting on boots and spurs and a hunting-cap, buckishly cocked on one side; and, tucking up her hair, she leaps nimbly on his back.*

Hoa, hoa! tally-ho! tally-ho! ho! ho!
Come, let us hunt these ugly badgers down,
These stinking foxes, these devouring otters,
These hares, these wolves, these anything but men.
Hey, for a whipper-in! my loyal Pigs,
Now let your noses be as keen as beagles',
Your steps as swift as greyhounds', and your cries
More dulcet and symphonious than the bells
Of village-towers, on sunshine holiday;
Wake all the dewy woods with jangling music.
Give them no law (are they not beasts of blood?)
But such as they gave you. Tally-ho! ho!
Through forest, furze and bog, and den and desert,
Pursue the ugly beasts! Tally-ho! ho!

FULL CHORUS OF IONA AND THE SWINE

Tally-ho! tally-ho!
Through rain, hail, and snow,
Through brake, gorse, and briar,
Through fen, flood, and mire,
We go, we go!

Tally-ho! tally-ho!
Through pond, ditch, and slough,
Wind them, and find them,
Like the Devil behind them!
Tally-ho, tally-ho!

[*Exeunt, in full cry;* IONA *driving on the Swine, with the empty Green Bag.*

EPIPSYCHIDION

VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE NOBLE AND UNFORTUNATE LADY

EMILIA V——

NOW IMPRISONED IN THE CONVENT OF ——

L' anima amante si slancia fuori del creato, e si crea nell' infinito un mondo tutto per essa, diverso assai da questo oscuro e pauroso baratro.

HER OWN WORDS.

Epipsychidion was published, without Shelley's name, apparently in an edition of one hundred copies, at London in the summer of 1821, under the imprint of S. & R. Bentley for C. & J. Ollier. The poem was composed at Pisa during the first weeks of 1821. The lady who inspired it was Teresa Emilia Viviani, eldest daughter of Count Viviani, a nobleman of Pisa. She had been placed by her family in the neighboring Convent of St. Anna, and there Shelley met her at the beginning of December, 1820, and interested himself in her fortunes.

ADVERTISEMENT

THE writer of the following lines died at Florence, as he was preparing for a voyage to one of the wildest of the Sporades, which he had bought and where he had fitted up the ruins of an old building, and where it was his hope to have realized a scheme of life, suited perhaps to that happier and better world of which he is now an inhabitant, but hardly practicable in this. His life was singular; less on account of the romantic vicissitudes which diversified it than the ideal tinge which it received from his own character and feelings. The present Poem, like the *Vita Nuova* of Dante, is sufficiently intelligible to a certain class of readers without a matter-of-fact history of the circumstances to which it relates; and to a certain other class it must ever remain incomprehensible from a defect of a common organ of perception for the ideas of which it treats. Not but that, *gran vergogna sarebbe a colui, che rimasse cosa sotto veste di figura o di colore rettorico: e domandato non sapesse denudare le sue parole da cotal veste, in guisa che avessero verace intendimento.*

The present poem appears to have been intended by the writer as the dedication to some longer one. The stanza on the opposite [following] page is almost a literal translation from Dante's famous Canzone

Voi, ch' intendendo, il terzo ciel movete, etc.

The presumptuous application of the concluding lines to his own composition will raise a smile at the expense of my unfortunate friend: be it a smile not of contempt, but pity.

My Song, I fear that thou wilt find but few
Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning,
Of such hard matter dost thou entertain;
Whence, if by misadventure chance should bring
Thee to base company (as chance may do)
Quite unaware of what thou dost contain,
I prithee, comfort thy sweet self again,
My last delight! tell them that they are dull,
And bid them own that thou art beautiful.

EPIPSYCHIDION

Sweet Spirit! sister of that orphan one,
Whose empire is the name thou weepest on,
In my heart's temple I suspend to thee
These votive wreaths of withered memory.

Poor captive bird! who from thy narrow cage
Pourest such music that it might assuage
The rugged hearts of those who prisoned thee,
Were they not deaf to all sweet melody, —
This song shall be thy rose; its petals pale
Are dead, indeed, my adored nightingale!
But soft and fragrant is the faded blossom,
And it has no thorn left to wound thy bosom.

High, spirit-wingèd Heart! who dost forever
Beat thine unfeeling bars with vain endeavor,
Till those bright plumes of thought, in which arrayed
It over-soared this low and worldly shade,
Lie shattered; and thy panting wounded breast
Stains with dear blood its unmaternal nest!
I weep vain tears; blood would less bitter be,
Yet poured forth gladlier, could it profit thee.

Seraph of Heaven! too gentle to be human,
Veiling beneath that radiant form of Woman

All that is insupportable in thee
Of light, and love, and immortality!
Sweet Benediction in the eternal Curse!
Veiled glory of this lampless Universe!
Thou Moon beyond the clouds! thou living Form
Among the Dead! thou Star above the Storm!
Thou Wonder, and thou Beauty, and thou Terror!
Thou Harmony of Nature's art! thou Mirror
In whom, as in the splendor of the Sun,
All shapes look glorious which thou gazest on!
Ay, even the dim words which obscure thee now
Flash, lightning-like, with unaccustomed glow;
I pray thee that thou blot from this sad song
All of its much mortality and wrong,
With those clear drops, which start like sacred dew
From the twin lights thy sweet soul darkens through,
Weeping, till sorrow becomes ecstasy —
Then smile on it, so that it may not die.

I never thought before my death to see
Youth's vision thus made perfect. Emily,
I love thee; though the world by no thin name
Will hide that love from its unvalued shame.
Would we two had been twins of the same mother!
Or that the name my heart lent to another
Could be a sister's bond for her and thee,
Blending two beams of one eternity!
Yet were one lawful and the other true,
These names, though dear, could paint not, as is due,

How beyond refuge I am thine. Ah me!
I am not thine — I am a part of *thee.*

Sweet Lamp! my moth-like Muse has burned its wings;
Or, like a dying swan who soars and sings,
Young Love should teach Time, in his own gray style,
All that thou art. Art thou not void of guile,
A lovely soul formed to be blessed and bless?
A well of sealed and secret happiness,
Whose waters like blithe light and music are,
Vanquishing dissonance and gloom? a star
Which moves not in the moving Heavens, alone?
A smile amid dark frowns? a gentle tone
Amid rude voices? a belovèd light?
A solitude, a refuge, a delight?
A lute, which those whom love has taught to play
Make music on, to soothe the roughest day
And lull fond grief asleep? a buried treasure?
A cradle of young thoughts of wingless pleasure?
A violet-shrouded grave of woe? — I measure
The world of fancies, seeking one like thee,
And find — alas! mine own infirmity.

She met me, Stranger, upon life's rough way,
And lured me towards sweet death; as Night by Day,
Winter by Spring, or Sorrow by swift Hope,
Led into light, life, peace. An antelope,
In the suspended impulse of its lightness,
Were less ethereally light; the brightness
Of her divinest presence trembles through

Her limbs, as underneath a cloud of dew
Embodied in the windless heaven of June,
Amid the splendor-wingèd stars, the Moon
Burns, inextinguishably beautiful;
And from her lips, as from a hyacinth full
Of honey-dew, a liquid murmur drops,
Killing the sense with passion, sweet as stops
Of planetary music heard in trance.
In her mild lights the starry spirits dance,
The sunbeams of those wells which ever leap
Under the lightnings of the soul — too deep
For the brief fathom-line of thought or sense.
The glory of her being, issuing thence,
Stains the dead, blank, cold air with a warm shade
Of unentangled intermixture, made
By Love, of light and motion; one intense
Diffusion, one serene Omnipresence,
Whose flowing outlines mingle in their flowing,
Around her cheeks and utmost fingers glowing,
With the unintermitted blood, which there
Quivers (as in a fleece of snow-like air
The crimson pulse of living morning quiver)
Continuously prolonged, and ending never
Till they are lost, and in that Beauty furled
Which penetrates and clasps and fills the world;
Scarce visible from extreme loveliness.
Warm fragrance seems to fall from her light dress,
And her loose hair; and where some heavy tress
The air of her own speed has disentwined,
The sweetness seems to satiate the faint wind;
And in the soul a wild odor is felt,

100 *morning quiver*, Shelley, 1821 || *morn may quiver*, Rossetti.

Beyond the sense, like fiery dews that melt
Into the bosom of a frozen bud.
See where she stands! a mortal shape indued
With love and life and light and deity,
And motion which may change but cannot die;
An image of some bright Eternity;
A shadow of some golden dream; a Splendor
Leaving the third sphere pilotless; a tender
Reflection of the eternal Moon of Love,
Under whose motions life's dull billows move;
A metaphor of Spring and Youth and Morning;
A vision like incarnate April, warning,
With smiles and tears, Frost the Anatomy
Into his summer grave.

Ah! woe is me!
What have I dared? where am I lifted? how
Shall I descend, and perish not? I know
That Love makes all things equal; I have heard
By mine own heart this joyous truth averred:
The spirit of the worm beneath the sod,
In love and worship, blends itself with God.

Spouse! Sister! Angel! Pilot of the Fate
Whose course has been so starless! Oh, too late
Belovèd! Oh, too soon adored, by me!
For in the fields of immortality
My spirit should at first have worshipped thine,
A divine presence in a place divine;
Or should have moved beside it on this earth,
A shadow of that substance, from its birth;
But not as now. I love thee; yes, I feel
That on the fountain of my heart a seal

Is set, to keep its waters pure and bright
For thee, since in those *tears* thou hast delight.
We — are we not formed, as notes of music are,
For one another, though dissimilar ;
Such difference without discord as can make
Those sweetest sounds, in which all spirits shake
As trembling leaves in a continuous air ?

Thy wisdom speaks in me, and bids me dare
Beacon the rocks on which high hearts are wrecked.
I never was attached to that great sect,
Whose doctrine is, that each one should select
Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,
And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend
To cold oblivion, though 'tis in the code
Of modern morals, and the beaten road
Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread
Who travel to their home among the dead
By the broad highway of the world, and so
With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe,
The dreariest and the longest journey go.

True Love in this differs from gold and clay,
That to divide is not to take away.
Love is like understanding that grows bright
Gazing on many truths ; 'tis like thy light,
Imagination ! which, from earth and sky,
And from the depths of human fantasy,
As from a thousand prisms and mirrors, fills
The Universe with glorious beams, and kills
Error, the worm, with many a sun-like arrow

142 *We*, omit, Rossetti conj.
153 *'tis in*, Boscombe MS. || *it is in*, Shelley, 1821.

Of its reverberated lightning. Narrow
The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates,
The life that wears, the spirit that creates
One object, and one form, and builds thereby
A sepulchre for its eternity.

Mind from its object differs most in this;
Evil from good; misery from happiness;
The baser from the nobler; the impure
And frail, from what is clear and must endure:
If you divide suffering and dross, you may
Diminish till it is consumed away;
If you divide pleasure and love and thought,
Each part exceeds the whole; and we know not
How much, while any yet remains unshared,
Of pleasure may be gained, of sorrow spared.
This truth is that deep well, whence sages draw
The unenvied light of hope; the eternal law
By which those live, to whom this world of life
Is as a garden ravaged, and whose strife
Tills for the promise of a later birth
The wilderness of this Elysian earth.

There was a Being whom my spirit oft
Met on its visioned wanderings, far aloft,
In the clear golden prime of my youth's dawn,
Upon the fairy isles of sunny lawn,
Amid the enchanted mountains, and the caves
Of divine sleep, and on the air-like waves
Of wonder-level dream, whose tremulous floor
Paved her light steps. On an imagined shore,
Under the gray beak of some promontory
She met me, robed in such exceeding glory

178 *and* ‖ *or*, Rossetti.

That I beheld her not. In solitudes
Her voice came to me through the whispering
woods,
And from the fountains and the odors deep
Of flowers, which, like lips murmuring in their sleep
Of the sweet kisses which had lulled them there,
Breathed but of *her* to the enamoured air;
And from the breezes whether low or loud,
And from the rain of every passing cloud,
And from the singing of the summer-birds,
And from all sounds, all silence. In the words
Of antique verse and high romance, in form,
Sound, color, in whatever checks that Storm
Which with the shattered present chokes the past,
And in that best philosophy, whose taste
Makes this cold common hell, our life, a doom
As glorious as a fiery martyrdom —
Her Spirit was the harmony of truth.

Then from the caverns of my dreamy youth
I sprang, as one sandalled with plumes of fire,
And towards the lodestar of my one desire
I flitted, like a dizzy moth, whose flight
Is as a dead leaf's in the owlet light,
When it would seek in Hesper's setting sphere
A radiant death, a fiery sepulchre,
As if it were a lamp of earthly flame.
But She, whom prayers or tears then could not
tame,
Passed, like a god throned on a wingèd planet,
Whose burning plumes to tenfold swiftness fan it,
Into the dreary cone of our life's shade;
And as a man with mighty loss dismayed,

I would have followed, though the grave between
Yawned like a gulf whose spectres are unseen ;
When a voice said: — "O Thou of hearts the weakest,
The phantom is beside thee whom thou seekest."
Then I — "Where?" the world's echo answered "Where?"
And in that silence, and in my despair,
I questioned every tongueless wind that flew
Over my tower of mourning, if it knew
Whither 'twas fled, this soul out of my soul ;
And murmured names and spells which have control
Over the sightless tyrants of our fate ;
But neither prayer nor verse could dissipate
The night which closed on her ; nor uncreate
That world within this Chaos, mine and me,
Of which she was the veiled Divinity, —
The world I say of thoughts that worshipped her ;
And therefore I went forth, with hope and fear
And every gentle passion sick to death,
Feeding my course with expectation's breath,
Into the wintry forest of our life ;
And struggling through its error with vain strife,
And stumbling in my weakness and my haste,
And half bewildered by new forms, I passed
Seeking among those untaught foresters
If I could find one form resembling hers,
In which she might have masked herself from me.
There, — One, whose voice was venomed melody
Sate by a well, under blue night-shade bowers ;
The breath of her false mouth was like faint flowers ;

Her touch was as electric poison, — flame
Out of her looks into my vitals came,
And from her living cheeks and bosom flew
A killing air, which pierced like honey-dew
Into the core of my green heart, and lay
Upon its leaves; until, as hair grown gray
O'er a young brow, they hid its unblown prime
With ruins of unseasonable time.

In many mortal forms I rashly sought
The shadow of that idol of my thought.
And some were fair — but beauty dies away;
Others were wise — but honeyed words betray;
And one was true — oh! why not true to me?
Then, as a hunted deer that could not flee,
I turned upon my thoughts, and stood at bay,
Wounded and weak and panting; the cold day
Trembled, for pity of my strife and pain,
When, like a noonday dawn, there shone again
Deliverance. One stood on my path who seemed
As like the glorious shape, which I had dreamed,
As is the Moon, whose changes ever run
Into themselves, to the eternal Sun;
The cold chaste Moon, the Queen of Heaven's bright isles,
Who makes all beautiful on which she smiles;
That wandering shrine of soft yet icy flame,
Which ever is transformed, yet still the same,
And warms not but illumines. Young and fair
As the descended Spirit of that sphere,
She hid me, as the Moon may hide the night
From its own darkness, until all was bright
Between the Heaven and Earth of my calm mind,

And, as a cloud charioted by the wind,
She led me to a cave in that wild place,
And sate beside me, with her downward face
Illumining my slumbers, like the Moon
Waxing and waning o'er Endymion.
And I was laid asleep, spirit and limb,
And all my being became bright or dim
As the Moon's image in a summer sea,
According as she smiled or frowned on me;
And there I lay, within a chaste cold bed.
Alas, I then was nor alive nor dead;
For at her silver voice came Death and Life,
Unmindful each of their accustomed strife,
Masked like twin babes, a sister and a brother,
The wandering hopes of one abandoned mother,
And through the cavern without wings they flew,
And cried, "Away! he is not of our crew."
I wept, and though it be a dream, I weep.

What storms then shook the ocean of my sleep,
Blotting that Moon, whose pale and waning lips
Then shrank as in the sickness of eclipse;
And how my soul was as a lampless sea,
And who was then its Tempest; and when She,
The Planet of that hour, was quenched, what frost
Crept o'er those waters, till from coast to coast
The moving billows of my being fell
Into a death of ice, immovable;
And then what earthquakes made it gape and split,
The white Moon smiling all the while on it; —
These words conceal; if not, each word would be
The key of stanchless tears. Weep not for me!

At length, into the obscure forest came
The Vision I had sought through grief and shame.
Athwart that wintry wilderness of thorns
Flashed from her motion splendor like the Morn's,
And from her presence life was radiated
Through the gray earth and branches bare and dead;
So that her way was paved and roofed above
With flowers as soft as thoughts of budding love;
And music from her respiration spread
Like light, — all other sounds were penetrated
By the small, still, sweet spirit of that sound,
So that the savage winds hung mute around;
And odors warm and fresh fell from her hair
Dissolving the dull cold in the frore air.
Soft as an Incarnation of the Sun,
When light is changed to love, this glorious One
Floated into the cavern where I lay,
And called my Spirit, and the dreaming clay
Was lifted by the thing that dreamed below
As smoke by fire, and in her beauty's glow
I stood, and felt the dawn of my long night
Was penetrating me with living light;
I knew it was the Vision veiled from me
So many years — that it was Emily.

Twin Spheres of light who rule this passive Earth,
This world of love, this *me;* and into birth
Awaken all its fruits and flowers, and dart
Magnetic might into its central heart;
And lift its billows and its mists, and guide
By everlasting laws each wind and tide

To its fit cloud, and its appointed cave;
And lull its storms, each in the craggy grave
Which was its cradle, luring to faint bowers
The armies of the rainbow-wingèd showers;
And, as those married lights, which from the towers
Of Heaven look forth and fold the wandering globe
In liquid sleep and splendor, as a robe;
And all their many-mingled influence blend,
If equal, yet unlike, to one sweet end; —
So ye, bright regents, with alternate sway,
Govern my sphere of being, night and day!
Thou, not disdaining even a borrowed might;
Thou, not eclipsing a remoter light;
And, through the shadow of the seasons three,
From Spring to Autumn's sere maturity,
Light it into the Winter of the tomb,
Where it may ripen to a brighter bloom.
Thou too, O Comet, beautiful and fierce,
Who drew the heart of this frail Universe
Towards thine own; till, wrecked in that convulsion,
Alternating attraction and repulsion,
Thine went astray, and that was rent in twain;
Oh, float into our azure heaven again!
Be there love's folding-star at thy return;
The living Sun will feed thee from its urn
Of golden fire; the Moon will veil her horn
In thy last smiles; adoring Even and Morn
Will worship thee with incense of calm breath
And lights and shadows, as the star of Death

369 *drew* || *drew'st*, Rossetti.

And Birth is worshipped by those sisters wild
Called Hope and Fear — upon the heart are piled
Their offerings, — of this sacrifice divine
A World shall be the altar.

Lady mine,
Scorn not these flowers of thought, the fading birth,
Which from its heart of hearts that plant puts forth,
Whose fruit, made perfect by thy sunny eyes,
Will be as of the trees of Paradise.

The day is come, and thou wilt fly with me.
To whatso'er of dull mortality
Is mine remain a vestal sister still;
To the intense, the deep, the imperishable,
Not mine, but me, henceforth be thou united
Even as a bride, delighting and delighted.
The hour is come — the destined Star has risen
Which shall descend upon a vacant prison.
The walls are high, the gates are strong, thick set
The sentinels — but true love never yet
Was thus constrained; it overleaps all fence;
Like lightning, with invisible violence
Piercing its continents; like Heaven's free breath,
Which he who grasps can hold not; liker Death,
Who rides upon a thought, and makes his way
Through temple, tower, and palace, and the array
Of arms; more strength has Love than he or they;
For it can burst his charnel, and make free
The limbs in chains, the heart in agony,
The soul in dust and chaos.

Emily,
A ship is floating in the harbor now,
A wind is hovering o'er the mountain's brow;
There is a path on the sea's azure floor —
No keel has ever ploughed that path before;
The halcyons brood around the foamless isles;
The treacherous Ocean has forsworn its wiles;
The merry mariners are bold and free:
Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with me?
Our bark is as an albatross, whose nest
Is a far Eden of the purple East;
And we between her wings will sit, while Night,
And Day, and Storm, and Calm, pursue their flight,
Our ministers, along the boundless Sea,
Treading each other's heels, unheededly.
It is an isle under Ionian skies,
Beautiful as a wreck of Paradise,
And, for the harbors are not safe and good,
This land would have remained a solitude
But for some pastoral people native there,
Who from the Elysian, clear, and golden air
Draw the last spirit of the age of gold,
Simple and spirited, innocent and bold.
The blue Ægean girds this chosen home
With ever-changing sound and light and foam,
Kissing the sifted sands and caverns hoar;
And all the winds wandering along the shore
Undulate with the undulating tide;
There are thick woods where sylvan forms abide,
And many a fountain, rivulet, and pond,
As clear as elemental diamond,
Or serene morning air; and far beyond,

The mossy tracks made by the goats and deer
(Which the rough shepherd treads but once a year)
Pierce into glades, caverns, and bowers, and halls
Built round with ivy, which the waterfalls
Illumining, with sound that never fails
Accompany the noonday nightingales;
And all the place is peopled with sweet airs;
The light clear element which the isle wears
Is heavy with the scent of lemon-flowers,
Which floats like mist laden with unseen showers,
And falls upon the eyelids like faint sleep;
And from the moss violets and jonquils peep,
And dart their arrowy odor through the brain
Till you might faint with that delicious pain.
And every motion, odor, beam, and tone,
With that deep music is in unison,
Which is a soul within the soul; they seem
Like echoes of an antenatal dream.
It is an isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth, and Sea,
Cradled and hung in clear tranquillity;
Bright as that wandering Eden, Lucifer,
Washed by the soft blue Oceans of young air.
It is a favored place. Famine or Blight,
Pestilence, War, and Earthquake, never light
Upon its mountain-peaks; blind vultures, they
Sail onward far upon their fatal way;
The wingèd storms, chanting their thunder-psalm
To other lands, leave azure chasms of calm
Over this isle, or weep themselves in dew,
From which its fields and woods ever renew
Their green and golden immortality.
And from the sea there rise, and from the sky
There fall, clear exhalations, soft and bright,

Veil after veil, each hiding some delight,
Which Sun or Moon or zephyr draw aside,
Till the isle's beauty, like a naked bride
Glowing at once with love and loveliness,
Blushes and trembles at its own excess;
Yet, like a buried lamp, a Soul no less
Burns in the heart of this delicious isle,
An atom of the Eternal, whose own smile
Unfolds itself, and may be felt, not seen,
O'er the gray rocks, blue waves, and forests green,
Filling their bare and void interstices.
But the chief marvel of the wilderness
Is a lone dwelling, built by whom or how
None of the rustic island-people know;
'Tis not a tower of strength, though with its height
It overtops the woods; but, for delight,
Some wise and tender Ocean-King, ere crime
Had been invented, in the world's young prime,
Reared it, a wonder of that simple time,
And envy of the isles, a pleasure-house
Made sacred to his sister and his spouse.
It scarce seems now a wreck of human art,
But, as it were, Titanic, in the heart
Of Earth having assumed its form, then grown
Out of the mountains, from the living stone,
Lifting itself in caverns light and high;
For all the antique and learned imagery
Has been erased, and in the place of it
The ivy and the wild vine interknit
The volumes of their many-twining stems;
Parasite flowers illume with dewy gems
The lampless halls, and, when they fade, the sky

473 *draw* || *draw*, Rosetti.

Peeps through their winter-woof of tracery
With moonlight patches, or star-atoms keen,
Or fragments of the day's intense serene,
Working mosaic on their Parian floors.
And, day and night, aloof, from the high towers
And terraces, the Earth and Ocean seem
To sleep in one another's arms, and dream
Of waves, flowers, clouds, woods, rocks, and all that we
Read in their smiles, and call reality.

This isle and house are mine, and I have vowed
Thee to be lady of the solitude.
And I have fitted up some chambers there
Looking towards the golden Eastern air,
And level with the living winds, which flow
Like waves above the living waves below.
I have sent books and music there, and all
Those instruments with which high spirits call
The future from its cradle, and the past
Out of its grave, and make the present last
In thoughts and joys which sleep, but cannot die,
Folded within their own eternity.
Our simple life wants little, and true taste
Hires not the pale drudge Luxury to waste
The scene it would adorn, and therefore still
Nature with all her children haunts the hill.
The ring-dove, in the embowering ivy, yet
Keeps up her love-lament, and the owls flit
Round the evening tower, and the young stars glance
Between the quick bats in their twilight dance;

504 *inter-woof*, Rossetti conj.

The spotted deer bask in the fresh moonlight
Before our gate, and the slow silent night
Is measured by the pants of their calm sleep.
Be this our home in life, and when years heap
Their withered hours, like leaves, on our decay,
Let us become the overhanging day,
The living soul of this Elysian isle,
Conscious, inseparable, one. Meanwhile
We two will rise, and sit, and walk together
Under the roof of blue Ionian weather,
And wander in the meadows, or ascend
The mossy mountains, where the blue heavens bend
With lightest winds, to touch their paramour;
Or linger, where the pebble-paven shore,
Under the quick faint kisses of the sea
Trembles and sparkles as with ecstasy, —
Possessing and possessed by all that is
Within that calm circumference of bliss,
And by each other, till to love and live
Be one; or, at the noontide hour, arrive
Where some old cavern hoar seems yet to keep
The moonlight of the expired night asleep,
Through which the awakened day can never peep;
A veil for our seclusion, close as Night's,
Where secure sleep may kill thine innocent lights;
Sleep, the fresh dew of languid love, the rain
Whose drops quench kisses till they burn again.
And we will talk, until thought's melody
Become too sweet for utterance, and it die
In words, to live again in looks, which dart
With thrilling tone into the voiceless heart,
Harmonizing silence without a sound.
Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms bound,

And our veins beat together; and our lips,
With other eloquence than words, eclipse
The soul that burns between them; and the wells
Which boil under our being's inmost cells,
The fountains of our deepest life, shall be
Confused in passion's golden purity,
As mountain-springs under the morning Sun.
We shall become the same, we shall be one
Spirit within two frames, oh! wherefore two?
One passion in twin-hearts, which grows and grew,
Till like two meteors of expanding flame
Those spheres instinct with it become the same,
Touch, mingle, are transfigured; ever still
Burning, yet ever inconsumable;
In one another's substance finding food,
Like flames too pure and light and unimbued
To nourish their bright lives with baser prey,
Which point to Heaven and cannot pass away;
One hope within two wills, one will beneath
Two overshadowing minds, one life, one death,
One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality,
And one annihilation. Woe is me!
The wingèd words on which my soul would pierce
Into the height of love's rare Universe,
Are chains of lead around its flight of fire.
I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire!

Weak Verses, go, kneel at your Sovereign's feet,
And say: — "We are the masters of thy slave;
What wouldest thou with us and ours and thine?"
Then call your sisters from Oblivion's cave,

All singing loud: "Love's very pain is sweet,
But its reward is in the world divine,
Which, if not here, it builds beyond the grave."
So shall ye live when I am there. Then haste
Over the hearts of men, until ye meet
Marina, Vanna, Primus, and the rest,
And bid them love each other and be blessed;
And leave the troop which errs, and which reproves,
And come and be my guest, — for I am Love's.

ADONAIS

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS

Ἀστὴρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες ἐνὶ ζώοισιν ἑῷος.
Νῦν δὲ θανὼν, λάμπεις ἕσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις.

PLATO.

Adonais was printed, with Shelley's name, at Pisa, with the types of Didot, as early as July 13, 1821, and copies were sent to London to be issued by Ollier. The poem was composed at Pisa between the last days of May and June 11 or, at the latest, June 16, 1821. Keats died February 23, 1821, at Rome. The Pisan text is modified by changes made by Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1], also partially incorporated in Galignani's edition of Coleridge, Shelley and Keats, Paris, 1829, for which it is presumed she had Shelley's authority. A few fragments are among the Boscombe MSS.

PREFACE

Φάρμακον ἦλθε, Βίων, τοτὶ σὸν στόμα, φάρμακον εἶδες·
Πῶς τεν τοῖς χείλεσσι ποτέδραμε, κοὐκ ἐγλυκάνθη;
Τίς δὲ βροτὸς τοσσοῦτον ἀνάμερος, ἢ κεράσαι τοι,
Ἢ δοῦναι λαλέοντι τὸ φάρμακον; ἔκφυγεν ᾠδάν.

MOSCHUS, EPITAPH. BION.

IT is my intention to subjoin to the London edition of this poem a criticism upon the claims of its lamented object to be classed among the writers of the highest genius who have adorned our age. My known repugnance to the narrow principles of taste on which several of his earlier compositions were modelled prove, at least, that I am an impartial judge. I consider the fragment of Hyperion as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years.

John Keats died at Rome of a consumption, in his twenty-fourth year, on the ——— of ——— 1821; and was buried in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants in that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius and the massy walls and towers, now mouldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.

The genius of the lamented person to whose memory I have dedicated these unworthy verses was not less delicate and fragile than it was beautiful; and where cankerworms abound what wonder if its young flower was blighted in the bud? The savage criticism on his *Endymion*, which appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a

rapid consumption ensued, and the succeeding acknowledgments from more candid critics of the true greatness of his powers were ineffectual to heal the wound thus wantonly inflicted.

It may be well said that these wretched men know not what they do. They scatter their insults and their slanders without heed as to whether the poisoned shaft lights on a heart made callous by many blows, or one like Keats's composed of more penetrable stuff. One of their associates is, to my knowledge, a most base and unprincipled calumniator. As to *Endymion*, was it a poem, whatever might be its defects, to be treated contemptuously by those who had celebrated with various degrees of complacency and panegyric *Paris* and *Woman* and a *Syrian Tale*, and Mrs. Lefanu and Mr. Barrett and Mr. Howard Payne and a long list of the illustrious obscure? Are these the men who in their venal good nature presumed to draw a parallel between the Rev. Mr. Milman and Lord Byron? What gnat did they strain at here after having swallowed all those camels? Against what woman taken in adultery dares the foremost of these literary prostitutes to cast his opprobrious stone? Miserable man! you, one of the meanest, have wantonly defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers but used none.

The circumstances of the closing scene of poor Keats's life were not made known to me until the *Elegy* was ready for the press. I am given to understand that the wound which his sensitive spirit had received from the criticism of *Endymion* was exasperated by the bitter sense of unrequited benefits; the poor fellow seems to have been hooted from the stage of life no less by those on whom he had wasted the promise of his genius than those on whom he had lavished his fortune and his care. He was accompanied to Rome and attended in his last illness by Mr. Severn, a young artist of the highest promise, who, I have been informed, "almost risked his own life, and sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance upon his dying friend." Had I known these circumstances before the completion of

my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr. Severn can dispense with a reward from "such stuff as dreams are made of." His conduct is a golden augury of the success of his future career — may the unextinguished Spirit of his illustrious friend animate the creations of his pencil, and plead against Oblivion for his name!

ADONAIS

I

I WEEP for Adonais — he is dead!
Oh, weep for Adonais! though our tears
Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!
And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers,
And teach them thine own sorrow! Say: "With me
Died Adonais; till the Future dares
Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
An echo and a light unto eternity!"

II

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay,
When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies
In darkness? where was lorn Urania
When Adonais died? With veilèd eyes,
'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise
She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath,
Rekindled all the fading melodies,
With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,
He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of death.

III

Oh, weep for Adonais — he is dead!
Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep!

Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed
Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep
Like his a mute and uncomplaining sleep;
For he is gone where all things wise and fair
Descend. Oh, dream not that the amorous Deep
Will yet restore him to the vital air;
Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

IV

Most musical of mourners, weep again!
Lament anew, Urania! — He died,
Who was the sire of an immortal strain,
Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride
The priest, the slave, and the liberticide
Trampled and mocked with many a loathèd rite
Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,
Into the gulf of death; but his clear Sprite
Yet reigns o'er earth, the third among the sons of light.

V

Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Not all to that bright station dared to climb;
And happier they their happiness who knew,
Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time
In which suns perished; others more sublime,
Struck by the envious wrath of man or God,
Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;
And some yet live, treading the thorny road,
Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene abode.

VI

But now, thy youngest, dearest one has perished,
The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished
And fed with true-love tears instead of dew;
Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
The bloom, whose petals, nipped before they blew,
Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;
The broken lily lies — the storm is overpast.

VII

To that high Capital, where kingly Death
Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay,
He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,
A grave among the eternal. — Come away!
Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still
He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;
Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

VIII

He will awake no more, oh, never more!
Within the twilight chamber spreads apace
The shadow of white Death, and at the door
Invisible Corruption waits to trace
His extreme way to her dim dwelling-place;

The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface
So fair a prey, till darkness and the law
Of change shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

IX

Oh, weep for Adonais! — The quick Dreams,
The passion-wingèd ministers of thought,
Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams
Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught
The love which was its music, wander not, —
Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,
But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn their lot
Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain,
They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.

X

And one with trembling hand clasps his cold head,
And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries,
"Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead;
See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes,
Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain."
Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise!
She knew not 'twas her own; as with no stain
She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain.

viii. 9 Galignani, 1829 || *Of mortal change shall fill the grave which is her maw*, Shelley, 1821.

XI

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
Washed his light limbs, as if embalming them;
Another clipped her profuse locks, and threw
The wreath upon him, like an anadem,
Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem;
Another in her wilful grief would break
Her bow and wingèd reeds, as if to stem
A greater loss with one which was more weak;
And dull the barbèd fire against his frozen cheek.

XII

Another Splendor on his mouth alit,
That mouth whence it was wont to draw the breath
Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,
And pass into the panting heart beneath
With lightning and with music; the damp death
Quenched its caress upon his icy lips;
And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
Of moonlight vapor, which the cold night clips,
It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed to its eclipse.

XIII

And others came — Desires and Adorations,
Wingèd Persuasions and veiled Destinies,
Splendors, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations
Of hopes and fears, and twilight Fantasies;
And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam

xii. 6 *his*, Shelley, 1821 || *its*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1].

Of her own dying smile instead of eyes,
Came in slow pomp; — the moving pomp might seem
Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

XIV

All he had loved, and moulded into thought
From shape, and hue, and odor, and sweet sound,
Lamented Adonais. Morning sought
Her eastern watch tower, and her hair unbound,
Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,
Dimmed the aërial eyes that kindle day;
After the melancholy thunder moaned,
Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay,
And the wild winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

XV

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,
And will no more reply to winds or fountains,
Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray,
Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day;
Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear
Than those for whose disdain she pined away
Into a shadow of all sounds: — a drear
Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear.

XVI

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down
Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,

Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown,
For whom should she have waked the sullen year?
To Phœbus was not Hyacinth so dear,
Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
Thou, Adonais; wan they stand and sere
Amid the faint companions of their youth,
With dew all turned to tears; odor, to sighing ruth.

XVII

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale,
Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain;
Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale
Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain
Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,
Soaring and screaming round her empty nest,
As Albion wails for thee: the curse of Cain
Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,
And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!

XVIII

Ah woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
But grief returns with the revolving year;
The airs and streams renew their joyous tone;
The ants, the bees, the swallows, reappear;
Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons' bier;
The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
And build their mossy homes in field and brere;

xvi. 3 *Or,* || *And,* James Thomson conj.
8 *faint companions,* Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1] || *drooping comrades,* Shelley, 1821.

And the green lizard and the golden snake,
Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

XIX

Through wood and stream and field and hill and Ocean,
A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst,
As it has ever done, with change and motion,
From the great morning of the world when first
God dawned on Chaos; in its stream immersed,
The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light;
All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst,
Diffuse themselves, and spend in love's delight
The beauty and the joy of their renewèd might.

XX

The leprous corpse, touched by this spirit tender,
Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
Like incarnations of the stars, when splendor
Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death
And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath.
Nought we know dies. Shall that alone which knows
Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
By sightless lightning? the intense atom glows
A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose.

XXI

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
But for our grief, as if it had not been,
And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!

XX. 3 *when,* || *where* or *whose,* Rossetti conj.

Whence are we, and why are we? of what
scene
The actors or spectators? Great and mean
Meet massed in death, who lends what life must
borrow.
As long as skies are blue and fields are green,
Evening must usher night, night urge the mor-
row,
Month follow month with woe, and year wake year
to sorrow.

XXII

He will awake no more, oh, never more!
"Wake thou," cried Misery, "childless Mother,
rise
Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core,
A wound more fierce than his with tears and
sighs."
And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,
And all the Echoes whom their sister's song
Had held in holy silence, cried, "Arise!"
Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,
From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendor
sprung.

XXIII

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs
Out of the East, and follows wild and drear
The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
Had left the Earth a corpse; — sorrow and fear
So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania;
So saddened round her like an atmosphere
Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way
Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay.

XXIV

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel,
And human hearts which, to her airy tread
Yielding not, wounded the invisible
Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell;
And barbèd tongues, and thoughts more sharp than they,
Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,
Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way.

XXV

In the death-chamber for a moment Death,
Shamed by the presence of that living Might,
Blushed to annihilation, and the breath
Revisited those lips, and life's pale light
Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear delight.
"Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,
As silent lightning leaves the starless night!
Leave me not!" cried Urania; her distress
Roused Death; Death rose and smiled, and met her vain caress.

XXVI

"Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;
Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
And in my heartless breast and burning brain
That word, that kiss, shall all thoughts else survive,

With food of saddest memory kept alive,
Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
Of thee, my Adonais! I would give
All that I am to be as thou now art!
But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence
depart!

XXVII

"O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men
Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty
heart
Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?
Defenceless as thou wert, oh, where was then
Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear?
Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,
The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee
like deer.

XXVIII

"The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead;
The vultures, to the conqueror's banner true,
Who feed where Desolation first has fed,
And whose wings rain contagion; — how they
fled,
When, like Apollo, from his golden bow
The Pythian of the age one arrow sped
And smiled! — The spoilers tempt no second
blow,
They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying
low.

xxviii. 9 *lying low*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1] || *as they go*, Shelley, 1821.

XXIX

"The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;
He sets, and each ephemeral insect then
Is gathered into death without a dawn,
And the immortal stars awake again;
So is it in the world of living men:
A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight
Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when
It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light
Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night."

XXX

Thus ceased she; and the mountain shepherds came,
Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent;
The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
Over his living head like Heaven is bent,
An early but enduring monument,
Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
In sorrow; from her wilds Ierne sent
The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
And love taught grief to fall like music from his tongue.

XXXI

'Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,
A phantom among men; companionless
As the last cloud of an expiring storm
Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness,

xxx. 2 *magic* || *tragic*, Rossetti conj.

Actæon-like, and now he fled astray
With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

XXXII

A pard-like Spirit beautiful and swift —
A love in desolation masked; — a Power
Girt round with weakness; — it can scarce uplift
The weight of the superincumbent hour;
It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,
A breaking billow; — even whilst we speak
Is it not broken? On the withering flower
The killing sun smiles brightly; on a cheek
The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break.

XXXIII

His head was bound with pansies over-blown,
And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue;
And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,
Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew
Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
Shook the weak hand that grasped it; of that crew
He came the last, neglected and apart;
A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.

XXXIV

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
Smiled through their tears; well knew that gentle band
Who in another's fate now wept his own,

As in the accents of an unknown land
He sung new sorrow; sad Urania scanned
The Stranger's mien, and murmured: "Who art thou?"
He answered not, but with a sudden hand
Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,
Which was like Cain's or Christ's — oh! that it should be so!

XXXV

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?
Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?
What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,
In mockery of monumental stone,
The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
Taught, soothed, loved, honored the departed one,
Let me not vex with inharmonious sighs
The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

XXXVI

Our Adonais has drunk poison — oh,
What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?
The nameless worm would now itself disown;
It felt, yet could escape the magic tone
Whose prelude held all envy, hate and wrong,
But what was howling in one breast alone,
Silent with expectation of the song,
Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

XXXVII

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame!
Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,

Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!
But be thyself, and know thyself to be!
And ever at thy season be thou free
To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow;
Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee;
Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt — as now.

XXXVIII

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
Far from these carrion kites that scream below;
He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead;
Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now.
Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow
Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
A portion of the Eternal, which must glow
Through time and change, unquenchably the same,
Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.

XXXIX

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep —
He hath awakened from the dream of life —
'Tis we, who, lost in stormy visions, keep
With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
And in mad trance strike with our spirit's knife
Invulnerable nothings. *We* decay
Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
Convulse us and consume us day by day,
And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

XL

He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
And that unrest which men miscall delight,
Can touch him not and torture not again;
From the contagion of the world's slow stain
He is secure, and now can never mourn
A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain;
Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn.

XLI

He lives, he wakes — 'tis Death is dead, not he;
Mourn not for Adonais. — Thou young Dawn,
Turn all thy dew to splendor, for from thee
The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;
Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air,
Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

XLII

He is made one with Nature: there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder to the song of night's sweet bird;
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its own;

Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

XLIII

He is a portion of the loveliness
Which once he made more lovely; he doth bear
His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there
All new successions to the forms they wear,
Torturing the unwilling dross that checks its flight
To its own likeness, as each mass may bear,
And bursting in its beauty and its might
From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

XLIV

The splendors of the firmament of time
May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;
Like stars to their appointed height they climb,
And death is a low mist which cannot blot
The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought
Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
And love and life contend in it for what
Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there
And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

XLV

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,

Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
Rose pale, — his solemn agony had not
Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought
And as he fell and as he lived and loved
Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved;
Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reproved.

XLVI

And many more, whose names on earth are dark
But whose transmitted effluence cannot die
So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
"Thou art become as one of us," they cry;
"It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long
Swung blind in unascended majesty,
Silent alone amid an Heaven of song.
Assume thy wingèd throne, thou Vesper of our throng!"

XLVII

Who mourns for Adonais? Oh, come forth,
Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.
Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;
As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
Satiate the void circumference; then shrink
Even to a point within our day and night;
And keep thy heart light lest it make thee sink
When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the brink.

XLVIII

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,
Oh, not of him, but of our joy; 'tis nought
That ages, empires, and religions, there
Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;
For such as he can lend, — they borrow not
Glory from those who made the world their prey;
And he is gathered to the kings of thought
Who waged contention with their time's decay,
And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

XLIX

Go thou to Rome, — at once the Paradise,
The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise,
And flowering weeds and fragrant copses dress
The bones of Desolation's nakedness,
Pass, till the Spirit of the spot shall lead
Thy footsteps to a slope of green access,
Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead
A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread;

L

And gray walls moulder round, on which dull Time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
Pavilioning the dust of him who planned
This refuge for his memory, doth stand
Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,

A field is spread, on which a newer band
Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath.

LI

Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet
To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned
Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,
Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,
Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find
Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind
Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

LII

The One remains, the many change and pass;
Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
Life, like a dome of many-colored glass,
Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
Until Death tramples it to fragments. — Die,
If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek!
Follow where all is fled! — Rome's azure sky,
Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak
The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

LIII

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?
Thy hopes are gone before; from all things here

They have departed ; thou shouldst now depart !
A light is passed from the revolving year,
And man, and woman ; and what still is dear
Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
The soft sky smiles, — the low wind whispers near ;
'Tis Adonais calls ! oh, hasten thither,
No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

LIV

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
That Beauty in which all things work and move,
That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse
Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
Which through the web of being blindly wove
By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
The fire for which all thirst, now beams on me,
Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

LV

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me ; my spirit's bark is driven
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given ;
The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven !
I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar ;
Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

HELLAS

A LYRICAL DRAMA

ΜΑΝΤΙΣ 'ΕΙΜ' 'ΕΣΘΛΩΝ 'ΑΓΩΝΩΝ
ŒDIP. COLON.

Hellas was published, with Shelley's name, in the spring of 1822, at London, under the imprint of S. & R. Bentley for C. & J. Ollier. The drama was composed at Pisa in the fall of 1821, and sent to Ollier, November 11. The text is modified by Shelley's list of Errata, sent to Ollier April 11, 1822. A transcript, made by Williams for Shelley, is in the possession of Mr. Frederick Locker-Lampson. Ollier had Shelley's permission to suppress any passage in the notes, and he omitted certain portions of them and also some lines of the poem itself. These passages were partially restored by Galignani, in his edition of Coleridge, Shelley and Keats, Paris, 1829, and by Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1]. Ollier also suppressed a paragraph of the preface which is now first restored from a unique copy of *Hellas* referred to here as Shelley, n. d., in the possession of Mr. C. W. Frederickson. *The Prologue* was published by Dr. Garnett in *Relics of Shelley*, 1862, from the Boscombe MSS.

To

HIS EXCELLENCY

PRINCE ALEXANDER MAVROCORDATO

LATE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS

TO THE HOSPODAR OF WALLACHIA

THE DRAMA OF HELLAS

IS INSCRIBED

AS AN IMPERFECT TOKEN

OF THE ADMIRATION, SYMPATHY, AND FRIENDSHIP

OF

THE AUTHOR

Pisa, *November* 1, 1821.

PREFACE

The poem of *Hellas*, written at the suggestion of the events of the moment, is a mere improvise, and derives its interest (should it be found to possess any) solely from the intense sympathy which the Author feels with the cause he would celebrate.

The subject in its present state is insusceptible of being treated otherwise than lyrically, and if I have called this poem a drama from the circumstance of its being composed in dialogue, the license is not greater than that which has been assumed by other poets who have called their productions epics, only because they have been divided into twelve or twenty-four books.

The *Persæ* of Æschylus afforded me the first model of my conception, although the decision of the glorious contest now waging in Greece being yet suspended forbids a catastrophe parallel to the return of Xerxes and the desolation of the Persians. I have, therefore, contented myself with exhibiting a series of lyric pictures and with having wrought upon the curtain of futurity, which falls upon the unfinished scene, such figures of indistinct and visionary delineation as suggest the final triumph of the Greek cause as a portion of the cause of civilization and social improvement.

The drama (if drama it must be called) is, however, so inartificial that I doubt whether, if recited on the Thespian wagon to an Athenian village at the Dionysiaca, it would have obtained the prize of the goat. I shall bear with equanimity any punishment greater than the loss of such a reward which the Aristarchi of the hour may think fit to inflict.

The only *goat-song* which I have yet attempted has, I confess, in spite of the unfavorable nature of the subject,

received a greater and a more valuable portion of applause than I expected or than it deserved.

Common fame is the only authority which I can allege for the details which form the basis of the poem, and I must trespass upon the forgiveness of my readers for the display of newspaper erudition to which I have been reduced. Undoubtedly, until the conclusion of the war, it will be impossible to obtain an account of it sufficiently authentic for historical materials ; but poets have their privilege, and it is unquestionable that actions of the most exalted courage have been performed by the Greeks — that they have gained more than one naval victory, and that their defeat in Wallachia was signalized by circumstances of heroism more glorious even than victory.

The apathy of the rulers of the civilized world to the astonishing circumstance of the descendants of that nation to which they owe their civilization — rising as it were from the ashes of their ruin — is something perfectly inexplicable to a mere spectator of the shows of this mortal scene. We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts, have their root in Greece. But for Greece, Rome, the instructor, the conqueror, or the metropolis of our ancestors, would have spread no illumination with her arms, and we might still have been savages and idolaters ; or, what is worse, might have arrived at such a stagnant and miserable state of social institution as China and Japan possess.

The human form and the human mind attained to a perfection in Greece which has impressed its image on those faultless productions whose very fragments are the despair of modern art, and has propagated impulses which cannot cease, through a thousand channels of manifest or imperceptible operation, to ennoble and delight mankind until the extinction of the race.

The modern Greek is the descendant of those glorious beings whom the imagination almost refuses to figure to itself as belonging to our kind, and he inherits much of their sensibility, their rapidity of conception, their enthusiasm and their courage. If in many instances he is degraded by moral and political slavery to the practice of the basest

vices it engenders — and that below the level of ordinary degradation — let us reflect that the corruption of the best produces the worst, and that habits which subsist only in relation to a peculiar state of social institution may be expected to cease so soon as that relation is dissolved. In fact, the Greeks, since the admirable novel of *Anastasius* could have been a faithful picture of their manners, have undergone most important changes ; the flower of their youth returning to their country from the universities of Italy, Germany and France have communicated to their fellow-citizens the latest results of that social perfection of which their ancestors were the original source. The university of Chios contained before the breaking out of the revolution eight hundred students, and among them several Germans and Americans. The munificence and energy of many of the Greek princes and merchants, directed to the renovation of their country with a spirit and a wisdom which has few examples, is above all praise.

The English permit their own oppressors to act according to their natural sympathy with the Turkish tyrant and to brand upon their name the indelible blot of an alliance with the enemies of domestic happiness, of Christianity and civilization.

Russia desires to possess, not to liberate Greece ; and is contented to see the Turks, its natural enemies, and the Greeks, its intended slaves, enfeeble each other until one or both fall into its net. The wise and generous policy of England would have consisted in establishing the independence of Greece and in maintaining it both against Russia and the Turk ; — but when was the oppressor generous or just ?

Should the English people ever become free, they will reflect upon the part which those who presume to represent their will have played in the great drama of the revival of liberty, with feelings which it would become them to anticipate. This is the age of the war of the oppressed against the oppressors, and every one of those ringleaders of the privileged gangs of murderers and swindlers, called sovereigns, look to each other for aid against the common enemy, and suspend their mutual jealousies in the presence of a

mightier fear. Of this holy alliance all the despots of the earth are virtual members. But a new race has arisen throughout Europe, nursed in the abhorrence of the opinions which are its chains, and she will continue to produce fresh generations to accomplish that destiny which tyrants foresee and dread.[1]

The Spanish Peninsula is already free. France is tranquil in the enjoyment of a partial exemption from the abuses which its unnatural and feeble government are vainly attempting to revive. The seed of blood and misery has been sown in Italy, and a more vigorous race is arising to go forth to the harvest. The world waits only the news of a revolution of Germany to see the tyrants who have pinnacled themselves on its supineness precipitated into the ruin from which they shall never arise. Well do these destroyers of mankind know their enemy, when they impute the insurrection in Greece to the same spirit before which they tremble throughout the rest of Europe, and that enemy well knows the power and the cunning of its opponents and watches the moment of their approaching weakness and inevitable division to wrest the bloody sceptres from their grasp.

[1] *Should . . . dread*, Shelley n. d. || omit, Shelley, 1822.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

THE PROLOGUE: —

HERALD OF ETERNITY.
CHRIST.
SATAN.
MAHOMET.
CHORUS.

THE DRAMA: —

MAHMUD.
HASSAN.
DAOOD.
AHASUERUS, a Jew.
PHANTOM OF MAHOMET THE SECOND.[1]
CHORUS OF GREEK CAPTIVE WOMEN.
MESSENGERS, SLAVES AND ATTENDANTS.

SCENE. Constantinople.
TIME. Sunset.

[1] Omit, Shelley, 1822.

PROLOGUE TO HELLAS

A FRAGMENT

HERALD OF ETERNITY

It is the day when all the sons of God
Wait in the roofless senate-house, whose floor
Is Chaos, and the immovable abyss
Frozen by His steadfast word to hyaline
. . . . . .
The shadow of God, and delegate
Of that before whose breath the universe
Is as a print of dew.
Hierarchs and kings
Who from your thrones pinnacled on the past
Sway the reluctant present, ye who sit
Pavilioned on the radiance or the gloom
Of mortal thought, which like an exhalation
Steaming from earth conceals the of heaven
Which gave it birth, assemble here
Before your Father's throne; the swift decree
Yet hovers, and the fiery incarnation
Is yet withheld, clothèd in which it shall
annul
The fairest of those wandering isles that gem
The sapphire space of interstellar air,
That green and azure sphere, that earth enwrapped
Less in the beauty of its tender light
Than in an atmosphere of living spirit

Which interpenetrating all the . . .
it rolls from realm to realm
And age to age, and in its ebb and flow
Impels the generations
To their appointed place,
Whilst the high Arbiter
Beholds the strife, and at the appointed time
Sends his decrees veiled in eternal . . .

Within the circuit of this pendant orb
There lies an antique region, on which fell
The dews of thought in the world's golden dawn
Earliest and most benign, and from it sprung
Temples and cities and immortal forms
And harmonies of wisdom and of song,
And thoughts, and deeds worthy of thoughts so fair.
And when the sun of its dominion failed,
And when the winter of its glory came,
The winds that stripped it bare blew on, and swept
That dew into the utmost wildernesses
In wandering clouds of sunny rain that thawed
The unmaternal bosom of the North.
Haste, sons of God, for ye beheld,
Reluctant, or consenting, or astonished,
The stern decrees go forth, which heaped on Greece
Ruin and degradation and despair.
A fourth now waits: assemble, sons of God,
To speed, or to prevent, or to suspend,
If, as ye dream, such power be not withheld,
The unaccomplished destiny.

. . . . . .

CHORUS

The curtain of the Universe
  Is rent and shattered,
The splendor-wingèd worlds disperse
  Like wild doves scattered.

  Space is roofless and bare,
And in the midst a cloudy shrine,
  Dark amid thrones of light.
In the blue glow of hyaline
Golden worlds revolve and shine.
  In flight
  From every point of the Infinite,
  Like a thousand dawns on a single night,
The splendors rise and spread;
And through thunder and darkness dread
Light and music are radiated,
And, in their pavilioned chariots led
By living wings high overhead,
  The giant Powers move,
Gloomy or bright as the thrones they fill.
. . . . . .
  A chaos of light and motion
  Upon that glassy ocean.
. . . . . .
  The senate of the Gods is met,
  Each in his rank and station set;
    There is silence in the spaces —
  Lo! Satan, Christ, and Mahomet
    Start from their places!

CHRIST

Almighty Father!
Low-kneeling at the feet of Destiny
. . . . . .
There are two fountains in which spirits weep
When mortals err, Discord and Slavery named,
And with their bitter dew two Destinies
Filled each their irrevocable urns; the third,
Fiercest and mightiest, mingled both, and added
Chaos and Death, and slow Oblivion's lymph,
And hate and terror, and the poisoned rain
. . . . . .
The Aurora of the nations. By this brow
Whose pores wept tears of blood, by these wide wounds,
By this imperial crown of agony,
By infamy and solitude and death,
For this I underwent, and by the pain
Of pity for those who would for me
The unremembered joy of a revenge,
For this I felt — by Plato's sacred light,
Of which my spirit was a burning morrow —
By Greece and all she cannot cease to be,
Her quenchless words, sparks of immortal truth,
Stars of all night — her harmonies and forms,
Echoes and shadows of what Love adores
In thee, I do compel thee, send forth Fate,
Thy irrevocable child: let her descend
A seraph-winged victory [arrayed]
In tempest of the omnipotence of God
Which sweeps through all things.

From hollow leagues, from Tyranny which arms
Adverse miscreeds and emulous anarchies
To stamp, as on a wingèd serpent's seed,
Upon the name of Freedom; from the storm
Of faction, which like earthquake shakes and sickens
The solid heart of enterprise; from all
By which the holiest dreams of highest spirits
Are stars beneath the dawn . . .

She shall arise
Victorious as the world arose from Chaos!
And as the Heavens and the Earth arrayed
Their presence in the beauty and the light
Of thy first smile, O Father, as they gather
The spirit of thy love which paves for them
Their path o'er the abyss, till every sphere
Shall be one living Spirit, so shall Greece —

SATAN

Be as all things beneath the empyrean,
Mine! Art thou eyeless like old Destiny,
Thou mockery-king, crowned with a wreath of thorns?
Whose sceptre is a reed, the broken reed
Which pierces thee! whose throne a chair of scorn;
For seest thou not beneath this crystal floor
The innumerable worlds of golden light
Which are my empire, and the least of them
which thou wouldst redeem from me?
Know'st thou not them my portion?
Or wouldst rekindle the strife

Which our great Father then did arbitrate
When he assigned to his competing sons
Each his apportioned realm ?
Thou Destiny,
Thou who art mailed in the omnipotence
Of Him who sends thee forth, whate'er thy task,
Speed, spare not to accomplish, and be mine
Thy trophies, whether Greece again become
The fountain in the desert whence the earth
Shall drink of freedom, which shall give it strength
To suffer, or a gulf of hollow death
To swallow all delight, all life, all hope.
Go, thou Vicegerent of my will, no less
Than of the Father's ; but lest thou shouldst faint,
The wingèd hounds, Famine and Pestilence,
Shall wait on thee, the hundred-forkèd snake,
Insatiate Superstition, still shall
The earth behind thy steps, and War shall hover
Above, and Fraud shall gape below, and Change
Shall flit before thee on her dragon wings,
Convulsing and consuming, and I add
Three vials of the tears which demons weep
When virtuous spirits through the gate of Death
Pass triumphing over the thorns of life,
Sceptres and crowns, mitres and swords and snares,
Trampling in scorn, like Him and Socrates.
The first is Anarchy ; when Power and Pleasure,
Glory and science and security,
On Freedom hang like fruit on the green tree,
Then pour it forth, and men shall gather ashes.
The second Tyranny —

CHRIST

Obdurate spirit!
Thou seest but the Past in the To-come.
Pride is thy error and thy punishment.
Boast not thine empire, dream not that thy worlds
Are more than furnace-sparks or rainbow-drops
Before the Power that wields and kindles them.
True greatness asks not space, true excellence
Lives in the Spirit of all things that live,
Which lends it to the worlds thou callest thine.

. . . . . .

MAHOMET

. . . . . .

Haste thou and fill the waning crescent
With beams as keen as those which pierced the shadow
Of Christian night rolled back upon the West
When the orient moon of Islam rode in triumph
From Tmolus to the Acroceraunian snow.

. . . . . .

Wake, thou Word
Of God, and from the throne of Destiny
Even to the utmost limit of thy way
May Triumph

. . . . . .

Be thou a curse on them whose creed
Divides and multiplies the most high God.

HELLAS

SCENE — *A Terrace, on the Seraglio.* MAHMUD (*sleeping*); *an Indian Slave sitting beside his Couch.*

CHORUS OF GREEK CAPTIVE WOMEN

We strew these opiate flowers
  On thy restless pillow;
They were stripped from orient bowers,
  By the Indian billow.
    Be thy sleep
    Calm and deep,
Like theirs who fell — not ours who weep!

INDIAN

Away, unlovely dreams!
  Away, false shapes of sleep!
Be his, as Heaven seems,
  Clear, and bright, and deep!
Soft as love, and calm as death,
Sweet as a summer night without a breath.

CHORUS

Sleep, sleep! our song is laden
  With the soul of slumber;
It was sung by a Samian maiden,
  Whose lover was of the number
    Who now keep
    That calm sleep
Whence none may wake, where none shall weep.

INDIAN

I touch thy temples pale!
I breathe my soul on thee!
And could my prayers avail,
All my joy should be
Dead, and I would live to weep,
So thou mightst win one hour of quiet sleep.

CHORUS

Breathe low, low,
The spell of the mighty mistress now!
When Conscience lulls her sated snake,
And Tyrants sleep, let Freedom wake.
Breathe low — low,
The words, which, like secret fire, shall flow
Through the veins of the frozen earth — low, low!

SEMICHORUS I

Life may change, but it may fly not;
Hope may vanish, but can die not;
Truth be veiled, but still it burneth;
Love repulsed, — but it returneth.

SEMICHORUS II

Yet were life a charnel, where
Hope lay coffined with Despair;
Yet were truth a sacred lie,
Love were lust —

SEMICHORUS I

If Liberty
Lent not life its soul of light,
Hope its iris of delight,

Truth its prophet's robe to wear,
Love its power to give and bear.

CHORUS

In the great morning of the world,
The spirit of God with might unfurled
The flag of Freedom over Chaos,
  And all its banded anarchs fled,
Like vultures frighted from Imaus
  Before an earthquake's tread.
So from Time's tempestuous dawn
Freedom's splendor burst and shone;
Thermopylæ and Marathon
Caught, like mountains beacon-lighted,
  The springing Fire; the winged glory
On Philippi half-alighted,
  Like an eagle on a promontory.
Its unwearied wings could fan
The quenchless ashes of Milan.
From age to age, from man to man
  It lived; and lit from land to land
  Florence, Albion, Switzerland.

Then night fell; and, as from night,
Reassuming fiery flight,
From the West swift Freedom came,
  Against the course of heaven and doom,
A second sun arrayed in flame,
  To burn, to kindle, to illume.
From far Atlantis its young beams
Chased the shadows and the dreams.
France, with all her sanguine steams,
Hid, but quenched it not; again

Through clouds its shafts of glory rain
From utmost Germany to Spain.

As an eagle fed with morning
Scorns the embattled tempest's warning,
When she seeks her aerie hanging
  In the mountain-cedar's hair,
And her brood expect the clanging
  Of her wings through the wild air,
Sick with famine; — Freedom so
To what of Greece remaineth now
Returns; her hoary ruins glow
Like orient mountains lost in day;
  Beneath the safety of her wings
Her renovated nurslings play,
  And in the naked lightnings
Of truth they purge their dazzled eyes.
Let Freedom leave, where'er she flies,
A desert, or a paradise;
  Let the beautiful and the brave
  Share her glory, or a grave.

SEMICHORUS I

With the gifts of gladness
  Greece did thy cradle strew;

SEMICHORUS II

With the tears of sadness
  Greece did thy shroud bedew;

SEMICHORUS I

With an orphan's affection
  She followed thy bier through time;

87 *play*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1] ‖ *prey*, Shelley, 1822.

SEMICHORUS II

And at thy resurrection
Reappeareth, like thou, sublime!

SEMICHORUS I

If Heaven should resume thee,
To Heaven shall her spirit ascend;

SEMICHORUS II

If Hell should entomb thee,
To Hell shall her high hearts bend.

SEMICHORUS I

If Annihilation —

SEMICHORUS II

Dust let her glories be;
And a name and a nation
Be forgotten, Freedom, with thee!

INDIAN

His brow grows darker — breathe not — move not!
He starts — he shudders; ye that love not,
With your panting loud and fast
Have awakened him at last.

MAHMUD (*starting from his sleep*)

Man the Seraglio-guard! make fast the gate.
What! from a cannonade of three short hours?
'Tis false! that breach towards the Bosphorus
Cannot be practicable yet — who stirs?

Stand to the match, that, when the foe prevails,
One spark may mix in reconciling ruin
The conqueror and the conquered! Heave the tower
Into the gap — wrench off the roof.

Enter HASSAN

Ha! what!
The truth of day lightens upon my dream,
And I am Mahmud still.

HASSAN

Your Sublime Highness
Is strangely moved.

MAHMUD

The times do cast strange shadows
On those who watch and who must rule their course,
Lest they, being first in peril as in glory,
Be whelmed in the fierce ebb: — and these are of them.
Thrice has a gloomy vision hunted me
As thus from sleep into the troubled day;
It shakes me as the tempest shakes the sea,
Leaving no figure upon memory's glass.
Would that — no matter. Thou didst say thou knewest
A Jew, whose spirit is a chronicle
Of strange and secret and forgotten things.
I bade thee summon him; 'tis said his tribe
Dream, and are wise interpreters of dreams.

HASSAN

The Jew of whom I spake is old, so old
He seems to have outlived a world's decay;
The hoary mountains and the wrinkled ocean
Seem younger still than he; his hair and beard
Are whiter than the tempest-sifted snow;
His cold pale limbs and pulseless arteries
Are like the fibres of a cloud instinct
With light, and to the soul that quickens them
Are as the atoms of the mountain-drift
To the winter wind; but from his eye looks forth
A life of unconsumèd thought which pierces
The present, and the past, and the to-come.
Some say that this is he whom the great prophet
Jesus, the son of Joseph, for his mockery,
Mocked with the curse of immortality.
Some feign that he is Enoch; others dream
He was pre-adamite, and has survived
Cycles of generation and of ruin.
The sage, in truth, by dreadful abstinence,
And conquering penance of the mutinous flesh,
Deep contemplation, and unwearied study,
In years outstretched beyond the date of man,
May have attained to sovereignty and science
Over those strong and secret things and thoughts
Which others fear and know not.

MAHMUD

I would talk
With this old Jew.

HASSAN

Thy will is even now

Made known to him, where he dwells in a sea-
cavern
'Mid the Demonesi, less accessible
Than thou or God! He who would question him
Must sail alone at sunset, where the stream
Of Ocean sleeps around those foamless isles,
When the young moon is westering as now,
And evening airs wander upon the wave;
And when the pines of that bee-pasturing isle,
Green Erebinthus, quench the fiery shadow
Of its gilt prow within the sapphire water,
Then must the lonely helmsman cry aloud,
Ahasuerus! and the caverns round
Will answer, Ahasuerus! If his prayer
Be granted, a faint meteor will arise,
Lighting him over Marmora, and a wind
Will rush out of the sighing pine forest,
And with the wind a storm of harmony
Unutterably sweet, and pilot him
Through the soft twilight to the Bosphorus:
Thence, at the hour and place and circumstance
Fit for the matter of their conference,
The Jew appears. Few dare, and few who dare
Win the desired communion — but that shout
Bodes — [*A shout within.*

MAHMUD

Evil, doubtless; like all human sounds.
Let me converse with spirits.

HASSAN

That shout again.

MAHMUD

This Jew whom thou hast summoned —

HASSAN

Will be here —

MAHMUD

When the omnipotent hour, to which are yoked
He, I, and all things, shall compel — enough.
Silence those mutineers — that drunken crew
That crowd about the pilot in the storm.
Ay! strike the foremost shorter by a head!
They weary me, and I have need of rest.
Kings are like stars — they rise and set, they have
The worship of the world, but no repose.

[*Exeunt severally.*

CHORUS

Worlds on worlds are rolling ever
From creation to decay,
Like the bubbles on a river,
Sparkling, bursting, borne away.
But they are still immortal
Who, through birth's orient portal
And death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,
Clothe their unceasing flight
In the brief dust and light
Gathered around their chariots as they go;
New shapes they still may weave,
New gods, new laws receive,
Bright or dim are they, as the robes they last
On Death's bare ribs had cast.

A power from the unknown God,
A Promethean conqueror, came;
Like a triumphal path he trod
The thorns of death and shame.

A mortal shape to him
Was like the vapor dim
Which the orient planet animates with light;
Hell, Sin and Slavery came,
Like bloodhounds mild and tame,
Nor preyed until their lord had taken flight;
The moon of Mahomet
Arose, and it shall set;
While blazoned as on heaven's immortal noon
The cross leads generations on.

Swift as the radiant shapes of sleep
From one, whose dreams are Paradise,
Fly, when the fond wretch wakes to weep,
And day peers forth with her blank eyes;
So fleet, so faint, so fair,
The Powers of earth and air
Fled from the folding star of Bethlehem;
Apollo, Pan, and Love,
And even Olympian Jove,
Grew weak, for killing Truth had glared on them;
Our hills and seas and streams
Dispeopled of their dreams,
Their waters turned to blood, their dew to tears,
Wailed for the golden years.

Enter MAHMUD, HASSAN, DAOOD, *and others*

MAHMUD

More gold? our ancestors bought gold with victory,
And shall I sell it for defeat?

DAOOD

The Janizars
Clamor for pay.

MAHMUD

Go, bid them pay themselves
With Christian blood! Are there no Grecian virgins
Whose shrieks and spasms and tears they may enjoy?
No infidel children to impale on spears?
No hoary priests after that Patriarch
Who bent the curse against his country's heart,
Which clove his own at last? Go! bid them kill;
Blood is the seed of gold.

DAOOD

It has been sown,
And yet the harvest to the sickle-men
Is as a grain to each.

MAHMUD

Then take this signet,
Unlock the seventh chamber, in which lie
The treasures of victorious Solyman,
An empire's spoil stored for a day of ruin.
O spirit of my sires, is it not come?
The prey-birds and the wolves are gorged and sleep;
But these, who spread their feast on the red earth,
Hunger for gold, which fills not. — See them fed;
Then lead them to the rivers of fresh death.

[*Exit* DAOOD.

Oh, miserable dawn, after a night
More glorious than the day which it usurped!
O faith in God! O power on earth! O word

Of the great Prophet, whose o'ershadowing wings
Darkened the thrones and idols of the West,
Now bright! — for thy sake cursèd be the hour,
Even as a father by an evil child,
When the orient moon of Islam rolled in triumph
From Caucasus to white Ceraunia!
Ruin above, and anarchy below;
Terror without, and treachery within;
The chalice of destruction full, and all
Thirsting to drink; and who among us dares
To dash it from his lips? and where is Hope?

HASSAN

The lamp of our dominion still rides high;
One God is God — Mahomet is his Prophet.
Four hundred thousand Moslems, from the limits
Of utmost Asia, irresistibly
Throng, like full clouds at the Sirocco's cry,
But not like them to weep their strength in tears;
They bear destroying lightning, and their step
Wakes earthquake, to consume and overwhelm,
And reign in ruin. Phrygian Olympus,
Tmolus, and Latmos, and Mycale, roughen
With horrent arms; and lofty ships, even now,
Like vapors anchored to a mountain's edge,
Freighted with fire and whirlwind, wait at Scala
The convoy of the ever-veering wind.
Samos is drunk with blood; the Greek has paid
Brief victory with swift loss and long despair.
The false Moldavian serfs fled fast and far
When the fierce shout of Allah-illa-Allah
Rose like the war-cry of the northern wind,
Which kills the sluggish clouds, and leaves a flock

Of wild swans struggling with the naked storm.
So were the lost Greeks on the Danube's day!
If night is mute, yet the returning sun
Kindles the voices of the morning birds;
Nor at thy bidding less exultingly
Than birds rejoicing in the golden day
The Anarchies of Africa unleash
Their tempest-wingèd cities of the sea,
To speak in thunder to the rebel world.
Like sulphurous clouds half-shattered by the storm,
They sweep the pale Ægean, while the Queen
Of Ocean, bound upon her island throne,
Far in the West, sits mourning that her sons,
Who frown on Freedom, spare a smile for thee.
Russia still hovers, as an eagle might
Within a cloud, near which a kite and crane
Hang tangled in inextricable fight,
To stoop upon the victor; for she fears
The name of Freedom, even as she hates thine.
But recreant Austria loves thee as the Grave
Loves Pestilence, and her slow dogs of war,
Fleshed with the chase, come up from Italy,
And howl upon their limits; for they see
The panther, Freedom, fled to her old cover,
Amid seas and mountains, and a mightier brood
Crouch round. What Anarch wears a crown or mitre,
Or bears the sword, or grasps the key of gold,
Whose friends are not thy friends, whose foes thy foes?
Our arsenals and our armories are full;
Our forts defy assault; ten thousand cannon
Lie ranged upon the beach, and hour by hour

Their earth-convulsing wheels affright the city;
The galloping of fiery steeds makes pale
The Christian merchant; and the yellow Jew
Hides his hoard deeper in the faithless earth.
Like clouds, and like the shadows of the clouds,
Over the hills of Anatolia,
Swift in wide troops the Tartar chivalry
Sweep; the far-flashing of their starry lances
Reverberates the dying light of day.
We have one God, one King, one Hope, one Law;
But many-headed Insurrection stands
Divided in itself, and soon must fall.

MAHMUD

Proud words, when deeds come short, are seasonable.
Look, Hassan, on yon crescent moon, emblazoned
Upon that shattered flag of fiery cloud
Which leads the rear of the departing day,
Wan emblem of an empire fading now!
See how it trembles in the blood-red air,
And like a mighty lamp whose oil is spent,
Shrinks on the horizon's edge, while, from above,
One star with insolent and victorious light
Hovers above its fall, and with keen beams,
Like arrows through a fainting antelope,
Strikes its weak form to death.

HASSAN

Even as that moon
Renews itself —

MAHMUD

Shall we be not renewed!
Far other bark than ours were needed now

To stem the torrent of descending time;
The spirit that lifts the slave before his lord
Stalks through the capitals of armèd kings,
And spreads his ensign in the wilderness;
Exults in chains; and, when the rebel falls,
Cries like the blood of Abel from the dust;
And the inheritors of the earth, like beasts
When earthquake is unleashed, with idiot fear
Cower in their kingly dens — as I do now.
What were Defeat, when Victory must appall?
Or Danger, when Security looks pale?
How said the messenger, who from the fort
Islanded in the Danube saw the battle
Of Bucharest? that —

HASSAN

Ibrahim's scimitar
Drew with its gleam swift victory from heaven
To burn before him in the night of battle —
A light and a destruction.

MAHMUD

Ay! the day
Was ours; but how?

HASSAN

The light Wallachians,
The Arnaut, Servian, and Albanian allies,
Fled from the glance of our artillery
Almost before the thunder-stone alit;
One half the Grecian army made a bridge
Of safe and slow retreat with Moslem dead;
The other —

MAHMUD

Speak — tremble not.

HASSAN

Islanded
By victor myriads formed in hollow square
With rough and steadfast front, and thrice flung back
The deluge of our foaming cavalry;
Thrice their keen wedge of battle pierced our lines.
Our baffled army trembled like one man
Before a host, and gave them space; but soon
From the surrounding hills the batteries blazed,
Kneading them down with fire and iron rain.
Yet none approached; till, like a field of corn
Under the hook of the swart sickle-man,
The band, entrenched in mounds of Turkish dead,
Grew weak and few. Then said the Pacha, "Slaves,
Render yourselves — they have abandoned you —
What hope of refuge, or retreat, or aid?
We grant your lives." — "Grant that which is thine own!"
Cried one, and fell upon his sword and died!
Another — "God, and man, and hope abandon me;
But I to them and to myself remain
Constant;" he bowed his head and his heart burst.
A third exclaimed, "There is a refuge, tyrant,
Where thou darest not pursue, and canst not harm,
Shouldst thou pursue; there we shall meet again."
Then held his breath, and, after a brief spasm,
The indignant spirit cast its mortal garment

Among the slain — dead earth upon the earth!
So these survivors, each by different ways,
Some strange, all sudden, none dishonorable,
Met in triumphant death; and, when our army
Closed in, while yet wonder, and awe, and shame
Held back the base hyenas of the battle
That feed upon the dead and fly the living,
One rose out of the chaos of the slain;
And if it were a corpse which some dread spirit
Of the old saviors of the land we rule
Had lifted in its anger, wandering by;
Or if there burned within the dying man
Unquenchable disdain of death, and faith
Creating what it feigned, — I cannot tell;
But he cried, "Phantoms of the free, we come!
Armies of the Eternal, ye who strike
To dust the citadels of sanguine kings,
And shake the souls throned on their stony hearts,
And thaw their frost-work diadems like dew;
O ye who float around this clime, and weave
The garment of the glory which it wears,
Whose fame, though earth betray the dust it clasped,
Lies sepulchred in monumental thought;
Progenitors of all that yet is great,
Ascribe to your bright senate, oh, accept
In your high ministrations, us, your sons —
Us first, and the more glorious yet to come!
And ye, weak conquerors! giants, who look pale
When the crushed worm rebels beneath your tread —
The vultures, and the dogs, your pensioners tame,
Are overgorged; but, like oppressors, still

They crave the relic of Destruction's feast.
The exhalations and the thirsty winds
Are sick with blood; the dew is foul with death;
Heaven's light is quenched in slaughter; thus where'er
Upon your camps, cities, or towers, or fleets,
The obscene birds the reeking remnants cast
Of these dead limbs, — upon your streams and mountains,
Upon your fields, your gardens, and your house-tops, —
Where'er the winds shall creep, or the clouds fly,
Or the dews fall, or the angry sun look down
With poisoned light — Famine, and Pestilence,
And Panic, shall wage war upon our side!
Nature from all her boundaries is moved
Against ye; Time has found ye light as foam.
The Earth rebels; and Good and Evil stake
Their empire o'er the unborn world of men
On this one cast; but ere the die be thrown,
The renovated genius of our race,
Proud umpire of the impious game, descends,
A seraph-wingèd Victory, bestriding
The tempest of the Omnipotence of God,
Which sweeps all things to their appointed doom,
And you to oblivion!" — More he would have said,
But —

MAHMUD

Died — as thou shouldst ere thy lips had painted
Their ruin in the hues of our success.
A rebel's crime, gilt with a rebel's tongue!
Your heart is Greek, Hassan.

455 *Your* ‖ *Thy*, Rossetti.

HASSAN

It may be so:
A spirit not my own wrenched me within,
And I have spoken words I fear and hate;
Yet would I die for—

MAHMUD

Live! oh, live! outlive
Me and this sinking empire. But the fleet—

HASSAN

Alas!

MAHMUD

The fleet which, like a flock of clouds
Chased by the wind, flies the insurgent banner!
Our wingèd castles from their merchant ships!
Our myriads before their weak pirate bands!
Our arms before their chains! our years of empire
Before their centuries of servile fear!
Death is awake! Repulse is on the waters;
They own no more the thunder-bearing banner
Of Mahmud, but, like hounds of a base breed,
Gorge from a stranger's hand, and rend their master.

HASSAN

Latmos, and Ampelos, and Phanæ, saw
The wreck—

MAHMUD

The caves of the Icarian isles
Told each to the other in loud mockery,

466 *Repulse is*, Shelley Errata || *Repulsed*, Shelley, 1822.
472 *Told*, Shelley Errata, Williams transcript || *Hold*, Shelley, 1822.

And with the tongue as of a thousand echoes,
First of the sea-convulsing fight — and then —
Thou darest to speak — senseless are the mountains;
Interpret thou their voice!

HASSAN

My presence bore
A part in that day's shame. The Grecian fleet
Bore down at daybreak from the north, and hung
As multitudinous on the ocean line
As cranes upon the cloudless Thracian wind.
Our squadron, convoying ten thousand men,
Was stretching towards Nauplia when the battle
Was kindled.
First through the hail of our artillery
The agile Hydriote barks with press of sail
Dashed; ship to ship, cannon to cannon, man
To man, were grappled in the embrace of war,
Inextricable but by death or victory.
The tempest of the raging fight convulsed
To its crystalline depths that stainless sea,
And shook heaven's roof of golden morning clouds
Poised on an hundred azure mountain isles.
In the brief trances of the artillery
One cry from the destroyed and the destroyer
Rose, and a cloud of desolation wrapped
The unforeseen event, till the north wind
Sprung from the sea, lifting the heavy veil
Of battle-smoke — then victory — victory!
For, as we thought, three frigates from Algiers
Bore down from Naxos to our aid, but soon
The abhorrèd cross glimmered behind, before,

Among, around us ; and that fatal sign
Dried with its beams the strength in Moslem hearts,
As the sun drinks the dew. — What more? We fled!
Our noonday path over the sanguine foam
Was beaconed — and the glare struck the sun pale —
By our consuming transports ; the fierce light
Made all the shadows of our sails blood-red,
And every countenance blank. Some ships lay feeding
The ravening fire even to the water's level:
Some were blown up ; some, settling heavily,
Sunk ; and the shrieks of our companions died
Upon the wind that bore us fast and far,
Even after they were dead. Nine thousand perished!
We met the vultures legioned in the air,
Stemming the torrent of the tainted wind ;
They, screaming from their cloudy mountain peaks,
Stooped through the sulphurous battle-smoke, and perched
Each on the weltering carcass that we loved,
Like its ill angel or its damnèd soul,
Riding upon the bosom of the sea,
We saw the dog-fish hastening to their feast.
Joy waked the voiceless people of the sea.
And ravening Famine left his ocean-cave
To dwell with War, with us, and with Despair.
We met night three hours to the west of Patmos,
And with night, tempest —

MAHMUD

Cease!

Enter a Messenger

MESSENGER

Your Sublime Highness,
That Christian hound, the Muscovite ambassador,
Has left the city. If the rebel fleet
Had anchored in the port, had victory
Crowned the Greek legions in the Hippodrome,
Panic were tamer. Obedience and Mutiny,
Like giants in contention planet-struck,
Stand gazing on each other. There is peace
In Stamboul.

MAHMUD

Is the grave not calmer still?
Its ruins shall be mine.

HASSAN

Fear not the Russian;
The tiger leagues not with the stag at bay
Against the hunter. Cunning, base, and cruel,
He crouches, watching till the spoil be won,
And must be paid for his reserve in blood.
After the war is fought, yield the sleek Russian
That which thou canst not keep, his deserved portion
Of blood, which shall not flow through streets and fields,
Rivers and seas, like that which we may win,
But stagnate in the veins of Christian slaves!

Enter Second Messenger

SECOND MESSENGER

Nauplia, Tripolizza, Mothon, Athens,
Navarin, Artas, Monembasia,
Corinth and Thebes, are carried by assault;
And every Islamite who made his dogs
Fat with the flesh of Galilean slaves
Passed at the edge of the sword; the lust of blood,
Which made our warriors drunk, is quenched in death;
But like a fiery plague breaks out anew
In deeds which make the Christian cause look pale
In its own light. The garrison of Patras
Has store but for ten days, nor is there hope
But from the Briton; at once slave and tyrant,
His wishes still are weaker than his fears,
Or he would sell what faith may yet remain
From the oaths broke in Genoa and in Norway;
And if you buy him not, your treasury
Is empty even of promises — his own coin.
The freedman of a western poet chief
Holds Attica with seven thousand rebels,
And has beat back the Pacha of Negropont;
The aged Ali sits in Yanina,
A crownless metaphor of empire;
His name, that shadow of his withered might,
Holds our besieging army like a spell
In prey to famine, pest, and mutiny;
He, bastioned in his citadel, looks forth
Joyless upon the sapphire lake that mirrors
The ruins of the city where he reigned,

Childless and sceptreless. The Greek has reaped
The costly harvest his own blood matured,
Not the sower, Ali — who has bought a truce
From Ypsilanti, with ten camel-loads
Of Indian gold.

Enter a Third Messenger.

MAHMUD

What more?

THIRD MESSENGER

The Christian tribes
Of Lebanon and the Syrian wilderness
Are in revolt; Damascus, Hems, Aleppo,
Tremble; the Arab menaces Medina;
The Æthiop has entrenched himself in Sennaar,
And keeps the Egyptian rebel well employed,
Who denies homage, claims investiture
As price of tardy aid. Persia demands
The cities on the Tigris, and the Georgians
Refuse their living tribute. Crete and Cyprus,
Like mountain-twins that from each other's veins
Catch the volcano fire and earthquake spasm,
Shake in the general fever. Through the city,
Like birds before a storm, the Santons shriek,
And prophesyings horrible and new
Are heard among the crowd; that sea of men
Sleeps on the wrecks it made, breathless and still.
A Dervise, learnèd in the Koran, preaches
That it is written how the sins of Islam
Must raise up a destroyer even now.
The Greeks expect a Saviour from the west,
Who shall not come, men say, in clouds and glory,

But in the Omnipresence of that Spirit
In which all live and are. Ominous signs
Are blazoned broadly on the noonday sky;
One saw a red cross stamped upon the sun;
It has rained blood; and monstrous births declare
The secret wrath of Nature and her Lord.
The army encamped upon the Cydaris
Was roused last night by the alarm of battle,
And saw two hosts conflicting in the air, —
The shadows doubtless of the unborn time
Cast on the mirror of the night. While yet
The fight hung balanced, there arose a storm
Which swept the phantoms from among the stars.
At the third watch the Spirit of the Plague
Was heard abroad flapping among the tents;
Those who relieved watch found the sentinels dead.
The last news from the camp is that a thousand
Have sickened, and —

Enter a Fourth Messenger

MAHMUD

And thou, pale ghost, dim shadow
Of some untimely rumor, speak!

FOURTH MESSENGER

One comes
Fainting with toil, covered with foam and blood;
He stood, he says, on Chelonites'
Promontory, which o'erlooks the isles that groan
Under the Briton's frown, and all their waters

620 *on Chelonites*, Shelley MS., Errata || *upon Clelonite's*, Shelley, 1822, *upon Chelonites*, Forman.

Then trembling in the splendor of the moon;
When, as the wandering clouds unveiled or hid
Her boundless light, he saw two adverse fleets
Stalk through the night in the horizon's glimmer,
Mingling fierce thunders and sulphureous gleams,
And smoke which strangled every infant wind
That soothed the silver clouds through the deep air.
At length the battle slept, but the Siroçco
Awoke, and drove his flock of thunder-clouds
Over the sea-horizon, blotting out
All objects — save that in the faint moon-glimpse
He saw, or dreamed he saw, the Turkish admiral
And two the loftiest of our ships of war
With the bright image of that Queen of Heaven,
Who hid, perhaps, her face for grief, reversed;
And the abhorrèd cross —

Enter an Attendant

ATTENDANT

Your Sublime Highness,
The Jew, who —

MAHMUD

Could not come more seasonably.
Bid him attend. I'll hear no more! too long
We gaze on danger through the mist of fear,
And multiply upon our shattered hopes
The images of ruin. Come what will!
To-morrow and to-morrow are as lamps
Set in our path to light us to the edge
Through rough and smooth; nor can we suffer aught
Which he inflicts not in whose hand we are.

[*Exeunt.*

SEMICHORUS I

Would I were the wingèd cloud
Of a tempest swift and loud!
I would scorn
The smile of morn,
And the wave where the moonrise is born!
I would leave
The spirits of eve
A shroud for the corpse of the day to weave
From other threads than mine!
Bask in the deep blue noon divine
Who would, not I.

SEMICHORUS II

Whither to fly?

SEMICHORUS I

Where the rocks that gird the Ægean
Echo to the battle pæan
Of the free,
I would flee,
A tempestuous herald of victory!
My golden rain
For the Grecian slain
Should mingle in tears with the bloody main;
And my solemn thunder-knell
Should ring to the world the passing-bell
Of tyranny!

SEMICHORUS II

Ah king! wilt thou chain
The rack and the rain?

657 *deep*, Shelley Errata, Williams transcript ‖ omit, Shelley, 1822.

Wilt thou fetter the lightning and hurricane?
The storms are free,
But we ——

CHORUS

O Slavery! thou frost of the world's prime,
Killing its flowers and leaving its thorns bare!
Thy touch has stamped these limbs with crime,
These brows thy branding garland bear;
But the free heart, the impassive soul,
Scorn thy control!

SEMICHORUS I

Let there be light! said Liberty;
And like sunrise from the sea
Athens arose! — Around her born,
Shone like mountains in the morn
Glorious states; — and are they now
Ashes, wrecks, oblivion?

SEMICHORUS II

Go
Where Thermæ and Asopus swallowed
Persia, as the sand does foam;
Deluge upon deluge followed,
Discord, Macedon, and Rome;
And, lastly, thou!

SEMICHORUS I

Temples and towers,
Citadels and marts, and they
Who live and die there, have been ours,
And may be thine, and must decay;

But Greece and her foundations are
Built below the tide of war,
Based on the crystalline sea
Of thought and its eternity;
Her citizens, imperial spirits,
  Rule the present from the past;
On all this world of men inherits
  Their seal is set.

SEMICHORUS II

  Hear ye the blast,
Whose Orphic thunder thrilling calls
From ruin her Titanian walls?
Whose spirit shakes the sapless bones
  Of Slavery? Argos, Corinth, Crete,
Hear, and from their mountain thrones
  The dæmons and the nymphs repeat
The harmony.

SEMICHORUS I

  I hear, I hear!

SEMICHORUS II

The world's eyeless charioteer,
  Destiny, is hurrying by!
What faith is crushed, what empire bleeds
Beneath her earthquake-footed steeds?
What eagle-wingèd Victory sits
At her right hand? what Shadow flits
Before? what Splendor rolls behind?
  Ruin and Renovation cry,
  Who but we?

SEMICHORUS I

I hear, I hear!
The hiss as of a rushing wind,
The roar as of an ocean foaming,
The thunder as of earthquake coming.
I hear, I hear!
The crash as of an empire falling,
The shrieks as of a people calling
Mercy! Mercy! — How they thrill!
Then a shout of "Kill, kill, kill!"
And then a small still voice, thus —

SEMICHORUS II

For
Revenge and Wrong bring forth their kind;
The foul cubs like their parents are;
Their den is in the guilty mind,
And Conscience feeds them with despair.

SEMICHORUS I

In sacred Athens, near the fane
Of Wisdom, Pity's altar stood;
Serve not the unknown God in vain,
But pay that broken shrine again
Love for hate, and tears for blood.

Enter MAHMUD *and* AHASUERUS

MAHMUD

Thou art a man, thou sayest, even as we.

AHASUERUS

No more!

MAHMUD

But raised above thy fellow-men
By thought, as I by power.

AHASUERUS

Thou sayest so.

MAHMUD

Thou art an adept in the difficult lore
Of Greek and Frank philosophy; thou numberest
The flowers, and thou measurest the stars;
Thou severest element from element;
Thy spirit is present in the past, and sees
The birth of this old world through all its cycles
Of desolation and of loveliness,
And when man was not, and how man became
The monarch and the slave of this low sphere,
And all its narrow circles — it is much.
I honor thee, and would be what thou art
Were I not what I am; but the unborn hour,
Cradled in fear and hope, conflicting storms,
Who shall unveil? Nor thou, nor I, nor any
Mighty or wise. I apprehended not
What thou hast taught me, but I now perceive
That thou art no interpreter of dreams;
Thou dost not own that art, device, or God,
Can make the future present — let it come!
Moreover thou disdainest us and ours!
Thou art as God, whom thou contemplatest.

755 *apprehended*, Shelley Errata, Williams transcript || *apprehend*, Shelley, 1822.

AHASUERUS

Disdain thee? — not the worm beneath thy feet!
The Fathomless has care for meaner things
Than thou canst dream, and has made pride for those
Who would be what they may not, or would seem
That which they are not. Sultan! talk no more
Of thee and me, the future and the past;
But look on that which cannot change — the One,
The unborn and the undying. Earth and Ocean,
Space, and the isles of life or light that gem
The sapphire floods of interstellar air,
This firmament pavilioned upon chaos,
With all its cressets of immortal fire,
Whose outwall, bastionèd impregnably
Against the escape of boldest thoughts, repels them
As Calpe the Atlantic clouds — this Whole
Of suns, and worlds, and men, and beasts, and flowers,
With all the silent or tempestuous workings
By which they have been, are, or cease to be,
Is but a vision; all that it inherits
Are motes of a sick eye, bubbles, and dreams;
Thought is its cradle and its grave, nor less
The future and the past are idle shadows
Of thought's eternal flight — they have no being;
Nought is but that which feels itself to be.

MAHMUD

What meanest thou? thy words stream like a tempest
Of dazzling mist within my brain — they shake

The earth on which I stand, and hang like night
On Heaven above me. What can they avail?
They cast on all things, surest, brightest, best, —
Doubt, insecurity, astonishment.

AHASUERUS

Mistake me not! All is contained in each.
Dodona's forest to an acorn's cup
Is that which has been or will be, to that
Which is — the absent to the present. Thought
Alone, and its quick elements, Will, Passion,
Reason, Imagination, cannot die;
They are what that which they regard appears,
The stuff whence mutability can weave
All that it hath dominion o'er — worlds, worms,
Empires, and superstitions. What has thought
To do with time, or place, or circumstance?
Wouldst thou behold the future? — ask and have!
Knock and it shall be opened — look, and lo!
The coming age is shadowed on the past
As on a glass.

MAHMUD

Wild, wilder thoughts convulse
My spirit. Did not Mahomet the Second
Win Stamboul?

AHASUERUS

Thou wouldst ask that giant spirit
The written fortunes of thy house and faith.
Thou wouldst cite one out of the grave to tell
How what was born in blood must die.

MAHMUD

Thy words
Have power on me! I see —

AHASUERUS

What hearest thou?

MAHMUD

A far whisper —
Terrible silence.

AHASUERUS

What succeeds?

MAHMUD

The sound
As of the assault of an imperial city,
The hiss of inextinguishable fire,
The roar of giant cannon; the earth-quaking
Fall of vast bastions and precipitous towers,
The shock of crags shot from strange enginery,
The clash of wheels, and clang of armèd hoofs
And crash of brazen mail, as of the wreck
Of adamantine mountains; the mad blast
Of trumpets, and the neigh of raging steeds,
And shrieks of women whose thrill jars the blood,
And one sweet laugh, most horrible to hear,
As of a joyous infant waked, and playing
With its dead mother's breast; and now more loud
The mingled battle-cry — ha! hear I not
Ἐν τούτῳ νίκη. Allah-illah-Allah!

AHASUERUS

The sulphurous mist is raised — thou seest —

MAHMUD

A chasm,
As of two mountains, in the wall of Stamboul;

And in that ghastly breach the Islamites,
Like giants on the ruins of a world,
Stand in the light of sunrise. In the dust
Glimmers a kingless diadem, and one
Of regal port has cast himself beneath
The stream of war. Another proudly clad
In golden arms spurs a Tartarian barb
Into the gap, and with his iron mace
Directs the torrent of that tide of men,
And seems — he is — Mahomet!

AHASUERUS

What thou seest
Is but the ghost of thy forgotten dream;
A dream itself, yet less, perhaps, than that
Thou call'st reality. Thou mayst behold
How cities, on which empire sleeps enthroned,
Bow their towered crests to mutability.
Poised by the flood, e'en on the height thou holdest,
Thou mayst now learn how the full tide of power
Ebbs to its depths. Inheritor of glory
Conceived in darkness, born in blood, and nourished
With tears and toil, thou seest the mortal throes
Of that whose birth was but the same. The Past
Now stands before thee like an Incarnation
Of the To-come; yet wouldst thou commune with
That portion of thyself which was ere thou
Didst start for this brief race whose crown is death,
Dissolve with that strong faith and fervent passion,
Which called it from the uncreated deep,
Yon cloud of war with its tempestuous phantoms
Of raging death; and draw with mighty will
The imperial shade hither.

[*Exit* AHASUERUS.

MAHMUD

Approach!

PHANTOM

I come
Thence whither thou must go! The grave is fitter
To take the living than give up the dead;
Yet has thy faith prevailed, and I am here.
The heavy fragments of the power which fell
When I arose, like shapeless crags and clouds,
Hang round my throne on the abyss, and voices
Of strange lament soothe my supreme repose,
Wailing for glory never to return.
A later empire nods in its decay;
The autumn of a greener faith is come;
And wolfish change, like winter, howls to strip
The foliage in which Fame, the eagle, built
Her aerie, while Dominion whelped below.
The storm is in its branches, and the frost
Is on its leaves, and the blank deep expects
Oblivion on oblivion, spoil on spoil,
Ruin on ruin. Thou art slow, my son;
The Anarchs of the world of darkness keep
A throne for thee, round which thine empire lies
Boundless and mute; and for thy subjects thou,
Like us, shalt rule the ghosts of murdered life,
The phantoms of the powers who rule thee now —
Mutinous passions and conflicting fears,
And hopes that sate themselves on dust and die,
Stripped of their mortal strength, as thou of thine.
Islam must fall, but we will reign together
Over its ruins in the world of death;

And if the trunk be dry, yet shall the seed
Unfold itself even in the shape of that
Which gathers birth in its decay. Woe! Woe!
To the weak people tangled in the grasp
Of its last spasms!

MAHMUD

Spirit, woe to all!
Woe to the wronged and the avenger! Woe
To the destroyer, woe to the destroyed!
Woe to the dupe, and woe to the deceiver!
Woe to the oppressed, and woe to the oppressor!
Woe both to those that suffer and inflict;
Those who are born, and those who die! But say,
Imperial shadow of the thing I am,
When, how, by whom, Destruction must accomplish
Her consummation?

PHANTOM

Ask the cold pale Hour,
Rich in reversion of impending death,
When *he* shall fall upon whose ripe gray hairs
Sit Care, and Sorrow, and Infirmity —
The weight which Crime, whose wings are plumed with years,
Leaves in his flight from ravaged heart to heart
Over the heads of men, under which burden
They bow themselves unto the grave. Fond wretch!
He leans upon his crutch, and talks of years
To come, and how in hours of youth renewed
He will renew lost joys, and —

VOICE (*without*)

Victory! victory!

[*The Phantom vanishes.*

MAHMUD

What sound of the importunate earth has broken
My mighty trance?

VOICE (*without*)

Victory! victory!

MAHMUD

Weak lightning before darkness! poor faint smile
Of dying Islam! Voice which art the response
Of hollow weakness! Do I wake and live?
Were there such things? or may the unquiet brain,
Vexed by the wise mad talk of the old Jew,
Have shaped itself these shadows of its fear?
It matters not! — for nought we see or dream,
Possess, or lose, or grasp at, can be worth
More than it gives or teaches. Come what may,
The future must become the past, and I
As they were, to whom once this present hour,
This gloomy crag of time to which I cling,
Seemed an Elysian isle of peace and joy
Never to be attained. — I must rebuke
This drunkenness of triumph ere it die,
And dying, bring despair. Victory! poor slaves!

[*Exit* MAHMUD.

VOICE (*without*)

Shout in the jubilee of death! the Greeks
Are as a brood of lions in the net
Round which the kingly hunters of the earth
Stand smiling. Anarchs, ye whose daily food
Are curses, groans, and gold, the fruit of death,

From Thule to the girdle of the world,
Come, feast! the board groans with the flesh of men;
The cup is foaming with a nation's blood;
Famine and Thirst await! eat, drink, and die!

SEMICHORUS I

Victorious Wrong, with vulture scream,
Salutes the risen sun, pursues the flying day!
I saw her ghastly as a tyrant's dream,
Perch on the trembling pyramid of night,
Beneath which earth and all her realms pavilioned lay
In visions of the dawning undelight.
Who shall impede her flight?
Who rob her of her prey?

VOICE (*without*)

Victory, victory! Russia's famished eagles
Dare not to prey beneath the crescent's light.
Impale the remnant of the Greeks! despoil!
Violate! make their flesh cheaper than dust!

SEMICHORUS II

Thou voice which art
The herald of the ill in splendor hid!
Thou echo of the hollow heart
Of monarchy, bear me to thine abode
When desolation flashes o'er a world destroyed.
Oh, bear me to those isles of jagged cloud
Which float like mountains on the earthquake, mid
The momentary oceans of the lightning;

Or to some toppling promontory proud
Of solid tempest, whose black pyramid,
Riven, overhangs the founts intensely brightning
Of those dawn-tinted deluges of fire
Before their waves expire,
When heaven and earth are light, and only light
In the thunder-night!

VOICE (*without*)

Victory, victory! Austria, Russia, England,
And that tame serpent, that poor shadow, France,
Cry peace, and that means death when monarchs speak.
Ho, there! bring torches, sharpen those red stakes!
These chains are light, fitter for slaves and poisoners
Than Greeks. Kill, plunder, burn! let none remain.

SEMICHORUS I

Alas for Liberty!
If numbers, wealth, or unfulfilling years,
Or fate, can quell the free!
Alas for Virtue! when
Torments, or contumely, or the sneers
Of erring judging men
Can break the heart where it abides!
Alas! if Love, whose smile makes this obscure world splendid,
Can change, with its false times and tides,
Like hope and terror —
Alas for Love!
And Truth, who wanderest lone and unbefriended,

If thou canst veil thy lie-consuming mirror
Before the dazzled eyes of Error,
Alas for thee! Image of the Above!

SEMICHORUS II

Repulse, with plumes from conquest torn,
Led the ten thousand from the limits of the morn
Through many an hostile Anarchy!
At length they wept aloud and cried, "the sea! the sea!"
Through exile, persecution, and despair,
Rome was, and young Atlantis shall become,
The wonder, or the terror, or the tomb,
Of all whose step wakes Power lulled in her savage lair.
But Greece was as a hermit child,
Whose fairest thoughts and limbs were built
To woman's growth by dreams so mild
She knew not pain or guilt;
And now, O Victory, blush! and Empire, tremble,
When ye desert the free!
If Greece must be
A wreck, yet shall its fragments reassemble,
And build themselves again impregnably
In a diviner clime,
To Amphionic music, on some Cape sublime,
Which frowns above the idle foam of time.

SEMICHORUS I

Let the tyrants rule the desert they have made;
Let the free possess the paradise they claim;
Be the fortune of our fierce oppressors weighed
With our ruin, our resistance, and our name!

SEMICHORUS II

Our dead shall be the seed of their decay,
Our survivors be the shadows of their pride,
Our adversity a dream to pass away, —
Their dishonor a remembrance to abide!

VOICE (*without*)

Victory! Victory! the bought Briton sends
The keys of ocean to the Islamite.
Now shall the blazon of the cross be veiled,
And British skill, directing Othman might,
Thunder-strike rebel victory. Oh, keep holy
This jubilee of unrevengèd blood!
Kill, crush, despoil! Let not a Greek escape!

SEMICHORUS I

Darkness has dawned in the East
On the noon of time;
The death birds descend to their feast,
From the hungry clime.
Let Freedom and Peace flee far
To a sunnier strand,
And follow Love's folding star
To the Evening land!

SEMICHORUS II

The young moon has fed
Her exhausted horn
With the sunset's fire;
The weak day is dead,
But the night is not born;
And, like loveliness panting with wild desire,

While it trembles with fear and delight,
Hesperus flies from awakening night,
And pants in its beauty and speed with light
Fast-flashing, soft and bright.
Thou beacon of love! thou lamp of the free!
Guide us far, far away,
To climes where now, veiled by the ardor of day,
Thou art hidden
From waves on which weary Noon
Faints in her summer swoon,
Between kingless continents, sinless as Eden,
Around mountains and islands inviolably
Pranked on the sapphire sea.

SEMICHORUS I

Through the sunset of hope,
Like the shapes of a dream,
What Paradise islands of glory gleam!
Beneath Heaven's cope,
Their shadows more clear float by;
The sound of their oceans, the light of their sky,
The music and fragrance their solitudes breathe,
Burst like morning on dream, or like Heaven on death,
Through the walls of our prison;
And Greece, which was dead, is arisen!

CHORUS

The world's great age begins anew,
The golden years return,

The earth doth like a snake renew
  Her winter weeds outworn;
Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam,
Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
  From waves serener far;
A new Peneus rolls his fountains
  Against the morning-star.
Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,
  Fraught with a later prize;
Another Orpheus sings again,
  And loves, and weeps, and dies.
A new Ulysses leaves once more
Calypso for his native shore.

Oh, write no more the tale of Troy,
  If earth Death's scroll must be!
Nor mix with Laian rage the joy
  Which dawns upon the free;
Although a subtler Sphinx renew
Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise,
  And to remoter time
Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
  The splendor of its prime;
And leave, if nought so bright may live,
All earth can take or Heaven can give.

Saturn and Love their long repose
  Shall burst, more bright and good
Than all who fell, than One who rose,
  Than many unsubdued;
Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,
But votive tears and symbol flowers.

Oh, cease! must hate and death return?
  Cease! must men kill and die?
Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn
  Of bitter prophecy.
The world is weary of the past,
Oh, might it die or rest at last!

1091–93 *more bright . . . unsubdued*, Shelley n. d. || omit, Shelley, 1822; *bright* || *wise*, Galignani, 1829; *unsubdued* || *unwithstood*, Galignani, 1829.

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

The *Miscellaneous Poems* with some exceptions were published either by Shelley, in his successive volumes, or by Mrs. Shelley, in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, and the two editions of 1839. A few first appeared elsewhere, and were included in the collected editions, and still others have from time to time found their way to the public. The original issue of each poem is stated, in this edition, in the footnotes. Manuscripts of several, either in Shelley's or Mrs. Shelley's hand, are in existence, and either establish the text or afford variations. The history of each poem, if known, is given in the NOTES.

EARLY POEMS

1813–1815

EVENING

TO HARRIET

O THOU bright Sun! beneath the dark blue line
  Of western distance that sublime descendest,
  And, gleaming lovelier as thy beams decline,
  Thy million hues to every vapor lendest,
And, over cobweb lawn and grove and stream
  Sheddest the liquid magic of thy light,
  Till calm Earth, with the parting splendor bright,
  Shows like the vision of a beauteous dream;
What gazer now with astronomic eye
  Could coldly count the spots within thy sphere?
  Such were thy lover, Harriet, could he fly
The thoughts of all that makes his passion dear,
  And, turning senseless from thy warm caress,
  Pick flaws in our close-woven happiness.

Evening. To Harriet. Published by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887. Composed July 31, 1813.

TO IANTHE

I LOVE thee, Baby! for thine own sweet sake;
Those azure eyes, that faintly dimpled cheek,
Thy tender frame, so eloquently weak,
Love in the sternest heart of hate might wake;
But more when o'er thy fitful slumber bending
Thy mother folds thee to her wakeful heart,
Whilst love and pity, in her glances blending,
All that thy passive eyes can feel impart:
More, when some feeble lineaments of her,
Who bore thy weight beneath her spotless bosom,
As with deep love I read thy face, recur, —
More dear art thou, O fair and fragile blossom;
Dearest when most thy tender traits express
The image of thy mother's loveliness.

STANZA

WRITTEN AT BRACKNELL

THY dewy looks sink in my breast;
Thy gentle words stir poison there;
Thou hast disturbed the only rest
That was the portion of despair!
Subdued to Duty's hard control,
I could have borne my wayward lot:
The chains that bind this ruined soul
Had cankered then — but crushed it not.

To Ianthe. Published by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887. Composed September, 1813.

Stanza. Published by Hogg, *Life of Shelley*, 1858. Composed March, 1814.

TO ——

ΔΑΚΡΥΣΙ ΔΙΟΙΣΩ ΠΟΤΜΟΝ 'ΑΠΟΤΜΟΝ.

Oh, there are spirits of the air,
And genii of the evening breeze,
And gentle ghosts, with eyes as fair
As star-beams among twilight trees!
Such lovely ministers to meet
Oft hast thou turned from men thy lonely feet.

With mountain winds, and babbling springs,
And moonlight seas, that are the voice
Of these inexplicable things,
Thou didst hold commune, and rejoice
When they did answer thee; but they
Cast, like a worthless boon, thy love away.

And thou hast sought in starry eyes
Beams that were never meant for thine,
Another's wealth; — tame sacrifice
To a fond faith! still dost thou pine?
Still dost thou hope that greeting hands,
Voice, looks or lips, may answer thy demands?

Ah, wherefore didst thou build thine hope
On the false earth's inconstancy?
Did thine own mind afford no scope
Of love, or moving thoughts to thee,
That natural scenes or human smiles
Could steal the power to wind thee in their wiles?

To ——. Shelley, 1816 || *To Coleridge*, note on the Early Poems, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1]. Published with *Alastor*, 1816.

Yes, all the faithless smiles are fled
Whose falsehood left thee broken-hearted;
The glory of the moon is dead;
Night's ghost and dreams have now departed;
Thine own soul still is true to thee,
But changed to a foul fiend through misery.

This fiend, whose ghastly presence ever
Beside thee like thy shadow hangs,
Dream not to chase; — the mad endeavor
Would scourge thee to severer pangs.
Be as thou art. Thy settled fate,
Dark as it is, all change would aggravate.

TO ——

Yet look on me — take not thine eyes away,
Which feed upon the love within mine own,
Which is indeed but the reflected ray
Of thine own beauty from my spirit thrown.
Yet speak to me — thy voice is as the tone
Of my heart's echo, and I think I hear
That thou yet lovest me; yet thou alone
Like one before a mirror, without care
Of aught but thine own features, imaged there;
And yet I wear out life in watching thee;
A toil so sweet at times, and thou indeed
Art kind when I am sick, and pity me.

To ——. Published by Mrs. Shelley, 1839[2].

STANZAS. APRIL, 1814

Away! the moor is dark beneath the moon,
Rapid clouds have drunk the last pale beam of even.
Away! the gathering winds will call the darkness soon,
And profoundest midnight shroud the serene lights of heaven.
Pause not! the time is past! every voice cries, Away!
Tempt not with one last tear thy friend's ungentle mood;
Thy lover's eye, so glazed and cold, dares not entreat thy stay;
Duty and dereliction guide thee back to solitude.

Away, away! to thy sad and silent home;
Pour bitter tears on its desolated hearth;
Watch the dim shades as like ghosts they go and come,
And complicate strange webs of melancholy mirth.
The leaves of wasted autumn woods shall float around thine head;
The blooms of dewy spring shall gleam beneath thy feet;

Stanzas. Published with *Alastor*, 1816. Composed at Bracknell.

i. 2 *drunk*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1] || *drank*, Shelley, 1816.
tear, Shelley, 1816 || *glance*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1].

But thy soul or this world must fade in the frost that binds the dead,
Ere midnight's frown and morning's smile, ere thou and peace, may meet.

The cloud-shadows of midnight possess their own repose,
For the weary winds are silent, or the moon is in the deep;
Some respite to its turbulence unresting ocean knows;
Whatever moves, or toils, or grieves, hath its appointed sleep.
Thou in the grave shalt rest — yet till the phantoms flee,
Which that house and heath and garden made dear to thee erewhile,
Thy remembrance, and repentance, and deep musings are not free
From the music of two voices, and the light of one sweet smile.

TO HARRIET

Thy look of love has power to calm
The stormiest passion of my soul;
Thy gentle words are drops of balm
In life's too bitter bowl;
No grief is mine, but that alone
These choicest blessings I have known.

To Harriet. Published by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887. Composed May, 1814.

Harriet! if all who long to live
  In the warm sunshine of thine eye,
That price beyond all pain must give, —
  Beneath thy scorn to die;
Then hear thy chosen own too late
His heart most worthy of thy hate.

Be thou, then, one among mankind
  Whose heart is harder not for state,
Thou only virtuous, gentle, kind,
  Amid a world of hate;
And by a slight endurance seal
A fellow-being's lasting weal.

For pale with anguish is his cheek,
  His breath comes fast, his eyes are dim,
Thy name is struggling ere he speak,
  Weak is each trembling limb;
In mercy let him not endure
The misery of a fatal cure.

Oh, trust for once no erring guide!
  Bid the remorseless feeling flee;
'Tis malice, 'tis revenge, 'tis pride,
  'Tis anything but thee;
Oh, deign a nobler pride to prove,
And pity if thou canst not love.

TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN

I

Mine eyes were dim with tears unshed;
Yes, I was firm — thus wert not thou;
My baffled looks did fear yet dread
To meet thy looks — I could not know
How anxiously they sought to shine
With soothing pity upon mine.

II

To sit and curb the soul's mute rage
Which preys upon itself alone;
To curse the life which is the cage
Of fettered grief that dares not groan,
Hiding from many a careless eye
The scornèd load of agony;

III

Whilst thou alone, then not regarded,
The thou alone should be, —
To spend years thus, and be rewarded,
As thou, sweet love, requited me
When none were near — Oh, I did wake
From torture for that moment's sake.

IV

Upon my heart thy accents sweet
Of peace and pity fell like dew

To Mary Wollstonecraft Godwin || To ——. Mrs. Shelley, 1824.
Published by Mrs. Shelley, 1824. Composed June, 1814.

On flowers half dead; thy lips did meet
Mine tremblingly; thy dark eyes threw
Their soft persuasion on my brain,
Charming away its dream of pain.

V

We are not happy, sweet! our state
Is strange and full of doubt and fear;
More need of words that ills abate; —
Reserve or censure come not near
Our sacred friendship, lest there be
No solace left for thee and me.

VI

Gentle and good and mild thou art,
Nor can I live if thou appear
Aught but thyself, or turn thine heart
Away from me, or stoop to wear
The mask of scorn, although it be
To hide the love thou feel'st for me.

MUTABILITY.

We are as clouds that veil the midnight moon;
How restlessly they speed, and gleam, and quiver,
Streaking the darkness radiantly! — yet soon
Night closes round, and they are lost forever:

Or like forgotten lyres whose dissonant strings
Give various response to each varying blast,
To whose frail frame no second motion brings
One mood or modulation like the last.

Mutability. Published with *Alastor*, 1816.

We rest — a dream has power to poison sleep;
We rise — one wandering thought pollutes the day;
We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep;
Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away:

It is the same! — for, be it joy or sorrow,
The path of its departure still is free;
Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow;
Nought may endure but Mutability.

ON DEATH

There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wisdom, in the grave, whither thou goest. — ECCLESIASTES.

THE pale, the cold, and the moony smile
Which the meteor beam of a starless night
Sheds on a lonely and sea-girt isle,
Ere the dawning of morn's undoubted light,
Is the flame of life so fickle and wan
That flits round our steps till their strength is gone.

O man! hold thee on in courage of soul
Through the stormy shades of thy worldly way,
And the billows of cloud that around thee roll
Shall sleep in the light of a wondrous day,
Where hell and heaven shall leave thee free
To the universe of destiny.

This world is the nurse of all we know,
This world is the mother of all we feel;

On Death, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1] || no title, Shelley, 1816. Published with *Alastor*, 1816.

And the coming of death is a fearful blow
To a brain unencompassed with nerves of steel,
When all that we know, or feel, or see,
Shall pass like an unreal mystery.

The secret things of the grave are there,
Where all but this frame must surely be,
Though the fine-wrought eye and the wondrous ear
No longer will live to hear or to see
All that is great and all that is strange
In the boundless realm of unending change.

Who telleth a tale of unspeaking death?
Who lifteth the veil of what is to come?
Who painteth the shadows that are beneath
The wide-winding caves of the peopled tomb?
Or uniteth the hopes of what shall be
With the fears and the love for that which we see?

A SUMMER EVENING CHURCHYARD

LECHLADE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

The wind has swept from the wide atmosphere
Each vapor that obscured the sunset's ray;
And pallid Evening twines its beaming hair
In duskier braids around the languid eyes of Day.
Silence and Twilight, unbeloved of men,
Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen.

A Summer Evening Churchyard. Published with *Alastor*, 1816. Composed September, 1815.

They breathe their spells toward the departing day,
  Encompassing the earth, air, stars and sea;
Light, sound and motion own the potent sway,
  Responding to the charm with its own mystery.
The winds are still, or the dry church-tower grass
Knows not their gentle motions as they pass.

Thou too, aërial Pile, whose pinnacles
  Point from one shrine like pyramids of fire,
Obeyest in silence their sweet solemn spells,
  Clothing in hues of heaven thy dim and distant spire,
Around whose lessening and invisible height
Gather among the stars the clouds of night.

The dead are sleeping in their sepulchres;
  And, mouldering as they sleep, a thrilling sound,
Half sense, half thought, among the darkness stirs,
  Breathed from their wormy beds all living things around;
And mingling with the still night and mute sky
Its awful hush is felt inaudibly.

Thus solemnized and softened, death is mild
  And terrorless as this serenest night;
Here could I hope, like some inquiring child
  Sporting on graves, that death did hide from human sight
Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep
That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep.

TO WORDSWORTH

Poet of Nature, thou hast wept to know
That things depart which never may return;
Childhood and youth, friendship and love's first glow,
Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn.
These common woes I feel. One loss is mine,
Which thou too feel'st, yet I alone deplore;
Thou wert as a lone star whose light did shine
On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar;
Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood
Above the blind and battling multitude;
In honored poverty thy voice did weave
Songs consecrate to truth and liberty;—
Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,
Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.

FEELINGS OF A REPUBLICAN ON THE FALL OF BONAPARTE

I hated thee, fallen tyrant! I did groan
To think that a most unambitious slave,
Like thou, shouldst dance and revel on the grave
Of Liberty. Thou mightst have built thy throne

To Wordsworth. Published with *Alastor*, 1816.
Feelings of a Republican on the Fall of Bonaparte. Published with *Alastor*, 1816.
3 *thou, shouldst* || *thee*, Rossetti conj., *should*, Rossetti.

Where it had stood even now: thou didst prefer
A frail and bloody pomp which time has swept
In fragments towards oblivion. Massacre,
For this I prayed, would on thy sleep have crept,
Treason and Slavery, Rapine, Fear, and Lust,
And stifled thee, their minister. I know
Too late, since thou and France are in the dust,
That Virtue owns a more eternal foe
Than Force or Fraud: old Custom, Legal Crime,
And bloody Faith, the foulest birth of time.

LINES

THE cold earth slept below;
Above the cold sky shone;
And all around,
With a chilling sound,
From caves of ice and fields of snow
The breath of night like death did flow
Beneath the sinking moon.

The wintry hedge was black;
The green grass was not seen;
The birds did rest
On the bare thorn's breast,
Whose roots, beside the pathway track,
Had bound their folds o'er many a crack
Which the frost had made between.

Thine eyes glowed in the glare
Of the moon's dying light;

Lines. Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *November, 1815.* The Literary Pocket-Book, 1823. Published by Hunt, 1823.

As a fen-fire's beam
On a sluggish stream
Gleams dimly — so the moon shone there,
And it yellowed the strings of thy tangled hair,
That shook in the wind of night.

The moon made thy lips pale, belovèd
The wind made thy bosom chill;
The night did shed
On thy dear head
Its frozen dew, and thou didst lie
Where the bitter breath of the naked sky
Might visit thee at will.

iii. 6 *tangled*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *raven*, Hunt, 1823.

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1816

THE SUNSET

THERE late was One within whose subtle being,
As light and wind within some delicate cloud
That fades amid the blue noon's burning sky,
Genius and death contended. None may know
The sweetness of the joy which made his breath
Fail, like the trances of the summer air,
When, with the lady of his love, who then
First knew the unreserve of mingled being,
He walked along the pathway of a field,
Which to the east a hoar wood shadowed o'er,
But to the west was open to the sky.
There now the sun had sunk; but lines of gold
Hung on the ashen clouds, and on the points
Of the far level grass and nodding flowers,
And the old dandelion's hoary beard,
And, mingled with the shades of twilight, lay
On the brown massy woods; and in the east
The broad and burning moon lingeringly rose
Between the black trunks of the crowded trees,
While the faint stars were gathering overhead.
"Is it not strange, Isabel," said the youth,

The Sunset. Published in part by Hunt in The Literary Pocket-Book, 1823, 9–20, with title, *Sunset. From an unpublished poem*, and, 28–42, with title, *Grief. A Fragment;* and, entire, by Mrs. Shelley, 1824. Composed at Bishopsgate in the spring.

4 *death*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839 [1] || *youth*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

"I never saw the sun? We will walk here
To-morrow; thou shalt look on it with me."

That night the youth and lady mingled lay
In love and sleep; but when the morning came
The lady found her lover dead and cold.
Let none believe that God in mercy gave
That stroke. The lady died not, nor grew wild,
But year by year lived on; in truth I think
Her gentleness and patience and sad smiles,
And that she did not die, but lived to tend
Her aged father, were a kind of madness,
If madness 'tis to be unlike the world.
For but to see her were to read the tale
Woven by some subtlest bard to make hard hearts
Dissolve away in wisdom-working grief.
Her eyes were black and lustreless and wan,
Her eyelashes were worn away with tears,
Her lips and cheeks were like things dead — so pale;
Her hands were thin, and through their wandering veins
And weak articulations might be seen
Day's ruddy light. The tomb of thy dead self
Which one vexed ghost inhabits, night and day,
Is all, lost child, that now remains of thee!

"Inheritor of more than earth can give,
Passionless calm and silence unreproved, —
Whether the dead find, oh, not sleep, but rest,
And are the uncomplaining things they seem,

22 *sunrise?* *We will wake,* Forman conj.
37 Hunt, 1823 || omit, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

Or live, or drop in the deep sea of Love;
Oh, that, like thine, mine epitaph were — Peace!"
This was the only moan she ever made.

HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY

I

The awful shadow of some unseen Power
Floats though unseen among us, visiting
This various world with as inconstant wing
As summer winds that creep from flower to flower;
Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower,
It visits with inconstant glance
Each human heart and countenance;
Like hues and harmonies of evening,
Like clouds in starlight widely spread,
Like memory of music fled,
Like aught that for its grace may be
Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

II

Spirit of Beauty, that dost consecrate
With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
Of human thought or form, where art thou gone?
Why dost thou pass away, and leave our state,

Hymn to Intellectual Beauty. Published by Hunt, Examiner, January 19, 1817, and with *Rosalind and Helen*, 1819. Composed, probably, in Switzerland, in the summer.

i. 2 *among*, Shelley, 1819 || *amongst*, Shelley, 1817.

ii. 1 *dost*, Shelley, 1819 || *doth*, Shelley, 1817.

This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate? —
Ask why the sunlight not forever
Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain river;
Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown;
Why fear and dream and death and birth
Cast on the daylight of this earth
Such gloom; why man has such a scope
For love and hate, despondency and hope.

III

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever
To sage or poet these responses given;
Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost and Heaven,
Remain the records of their vain endeavor —
Frail spells, whose uttered charm might not avail to sever,
From all we hear and all we see,
Doubt, chance and mutability.
Thy light alone, like mist o'er mountains driven,
Or music by the night wind sent
Through strings of some still instrument,
Or moonlight on a midnight stream,
Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

IV

Love, Hope and Self-esteem, like clouds, depart,
And come, for some uncertain moments lent.
Man were immortal and omnipotent,
Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art,

ii. 9 *fear and dream* || *care and pain*, Boscombe MS.
iv. omit, Boscombe MS.

Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.
Thou messenger of sympathies
That wax and wane in lovers' eyes!
Thou, that to human thought art nourishment,
Like darkness to a dying flame,
Depart not as thy shadow came!
Depart not, lest the grave should be,
Like life and fear, a dark reality!

V

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,
And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
Hopes of high talk with the departed dead;
I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed.
I was not heard — I saw them not —
When, musing deeply on the lot
Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing
All vital things that wake to bring
News of birds and blossoming, —
Sudden thy shadow fell on me;
I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy!

VI

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
To thee and thine — have I not kept the vow?
With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now

iv. 8 *art*, Shelley, 1817 || *are*, Shelley, 1819.

I call the phantoms of a thousand hours
Each from his voiceless grave: they have in visioned bowers
Of studious zeal or love's delight
Outwatched with me the envious night —
They know that never joy illumed my brow
Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst free
This world from its dark slavery, —
That thou, O awful Loveliness,
Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

VII

The day becomes more solemn and serene
When noon is past; there is a harmony
In autumn, and a lustre in its sky,
Which through the summer is not heard or seen,
As if it could not be, as if it had not been!
Thus let thy power, which like the truth
Of nature on my passive youth
Descended, to my onward life supply
Its calm, — to one who worships thee,
And every form containing thee,
Whom, Spirit fair, thy spells did bind
To fear himself, and love all humankind.

MONT BLANC

LINES WRITTEN IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI

I

The everlasting universe of things
Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,

Mont Blanc. Published in the *History of a Six Weeks' Tour*, 1817. Composed in Switzerland, in July.

Now dark, now glittering, now reflecting gloom,
Now lending splendor, where from secret springs
The source of human thought its tribute brings
Of waters, — with a sound but half its own,
Such as a feeble brook will oft assume
In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,
Where waterfalls around it leap forever,
Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river
Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.

II

Thus thou, Ravine of Arve — dark, deep Ravine —
Thou many-colored, many-voicèd vale,
Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns sail
Fast cloud-shadows, and sunbeams ! awful scene,
Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down
From the ice-gulfs that gird his secret throne,
Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame
Of lightning through the tempest! thou dost lie, —
Thy giant brood of pines around thee clinging,
Children of elder time, in whose devotion
The chainless winds still come and ever came
To drink their odors, and their mighty swinging
To hear — an old and solemn harmony ;
Thine earthly rainbows stretched across the sweep
Of the ethereal waterfall, whose veil
Robes some unsculptured image ; the strange sleep
Which when the voices of the desert fail
Wraps all in its own deep eternity ;
Thy caverns ecnoing to the Arve's commotion —
A loud, lone sound no other sound can tame.
Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,

Thou art the path of that unresting sound,
Dizzy Ravine! and when I gaze on thee,
I seem as in a trance sublime and strange
To muse on my own separate fantasy,
My own, my human mind, which passively
Now renders and receives fast influencings,
Holding an unremitting interchange
With the clear universe of things around;
One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings
Now float above thy darkness, and now rest,
Where that or thou art no unbidden guest,
In the still cave of the witch Poesy,
Seeking among the shadows that pass by —
Ghosts of all things that are — some shade of thee,
Some phantom, some faint image; till the breast
From which they fled recalls them, thou art there!

III

Some say that gleams of a remoter world
Visit the soul in sleep, — that death is slumber,
And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber
Of those who wake and live. I look on high;
Has some unknown Omnipotence unfurled
The veil of life and death? or do I lie
In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep
Spread far around and inaccessibly
Its circles? for the very spirit fails,
Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep
That vanishes among the viewless gales!
Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky,
Mont Blanc appears, — still, snowy and serene —

iii. 5 *upfurled*, James Thomson conj.

Its subject mountains their unearthly forms
Pile around it, ice and rock ; broad vales between
Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,
Blue as the overhanging heaven, that spread
And wind among the accumulated steeps ;
A desert peopled by the storms alone,
Save when the eagle brings some hunter's bone,
And the wolf tracks her there. How hideously
Its shapes are heaped around ! rude, bare and high,
Ghastly, and scarred, and riven.— Is this the scene
Where the old Earthquake-dæmon taught her young
Ruin ? Were these their toys ? or did a sea
Of fire envelop once this silent snow ?
None can reply — all seems eternal now.
The wilderness has a mysterious tongue
Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,
So solemn, so serene, that man may be
But for such faith with Nature reconciled ;
Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal
Large codes of fraud and woe ; not understood
By all, but which the wise, and great, and good,
Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

IV

The fields, the lakes, the forests and the streams,
Ocean, and all the living things that dwell
Within the dædal earth, lightning, and rain,
Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,
The torpor of the year when feeble dreams

iii. 15 *round*, Rossetti conj.
21 *tracks her there* || *watches her*, Boscombe MS.
31 *In such a faith*, Boscombe MS.

Visit the hidden buds or dreamless sleep
Holds every future leaf and flower, the bound
With which from that detested trance they leap,
The works and ways of man, their death and birth,
And that of him and all that his may be, —
All things that move and breathe with toil and sound
Are born and die, revolve, subside and swell;
Power dwells apart in its tranquillity,
Remote, serene, and inaccessible; —
And *this*, the naked countenance of earth
On which I gaze, even these primeval mountains,
Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers creep,
Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far fountains,
Slow rolling on; there many a precipice
Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal power
Have piled — dome, pyramid and pinnacle,
A city of death, distinct with many a tower
And wall impregnable of beaming ice;
Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin
Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky
Rolls its perpetual stream; vast pines are strewing
Its destined path, or in the mangled soil
Branchless and shattered stand; the rocks, drawn down
From yon remotest waste, have overthrown
The limits of the dead and living world,
Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place
Of insects, beasts and birds, becomes its spoil,
Their food and their retreat forever gone;
So much of life and joy is lost. The race

iv. 25 *the boundary of the skies*, Rossetti.

Of man flies far in dread; his work and dwelling
Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,
And their place is not known. Below, vast caves
Shine in the rushing torrents' restless gleam,
Which from those secret chasms in tumult welling
Meet in the Vale; and one majestic River,
The breath and blood of distant lands, forever
Rolls its loud waters to the ocean waves,
Breathes its swift vapors to the circling air.

V

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high: the power is there,
The still and solemn power of many sights
And many sounds, and much of life and death.
In the calm darkness of the moonless nights,
In the lone glare of day, the snows descend
Upon that Mountain; none beholds them there,
Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,
Or the star-beams dart through them; winds contend
Silently there, and heap the snow, with breath
Rapid and strong, but silently! Its home
The voiceless lightning in these solitudes
Keeps innocently, and like vapor broods
Over the snow. The secret strength of things,
Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome
Of heaven is as a law, inhabits thee!
And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
If to the human mind's imaginings
Silence and solitude were vacancy?

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1817

MARIANNE'S DREAM

I

A PALE dream came to a Lady fair,
And said, "A boon, a boon, I pray!
I know the secrets of the air;
And things are lost in the glare of day,
Which I can make the sleeping see,
If they will put their trust in me.

II

"And thou shalt know of things unknown,
If thou wilt let me rest between
The veiny lids whose fringe is thrown
Over thine eyes so dark and sheen."
And half in hope and half in fright
The Lady closed her eyes so bright.

III

At first all deadly shapes were driven
Tumultuously across her sleep,
And o'er the vast cope of bending heaven
All ghastly-visaged clouds did sweep;
And the Lady ever looked to spy
If the golden sun shone forth on high.

Marianne's Dream. Published by Hunt in The Literary Pocket-Book, 1819. Composed at Marlow, 1817.
iii. 6 *gold*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

IV

And, as towards the east she turned,
  She saw aloft in the morning air,
Which now with hues of sunrise burned,
  A great black Anchor rising there;
And, wherever the Lady turned her eyes,
It hung before her in the skies.

V

The sky was blue as the summer sea,
  The depths were cloudless overhead,
The air was calm as it could be,
  There was no sight or sound of dread,
But that black Anchor floating still
Over the piny eastern hill.

VI

The Lady grew sick with a weight of fear
  To see that Anchor ever hanging,
And veiled her eyes; she then did hear
  The sound as of a dim low clanging,
And looked abroad if she might know
Was it aught else, or but the flow
Of the blood in her own veins, to and fro.

VII

There was a mist in the sunless air,
  Which shook as it were with an earthquake's shock,
But the very weeds that blossomed there
  Were moveless, and each mighty rock

Stood on its basis steadfastly;
The Anchor was seen no more on high.

VIII

But piled around, with summits hid
  In lines of cloud at intervals,
Stood many a mountain pyramid,
  Among whose everlasting walls
Two mighty cities shone, and ever
Through the red mist their domes did quiver.

IX

On two dread mountains, from whose crest
  Might seem the eagle for her brood
Would ne'er have hung her dizzy nest,
  Those tower-encircled cities stood.
A vision strange such towers to see,
Sculptured and wrought so gorgeously,
Where human art could never be.

X

And columns framed of marble white,
  And giant fanes, dome over dome
Piled, and triumphant gates, all bright
  With workmanship, which could not come
From touch of mortal instrument,
Shot o'er the vales, or lustre lent
From its own shapes magnificent.

XI

But still the Lady heard that clang
  Filling the wide air far away;

x. 6 *vales a*, Rossetti conj.; 7 *its* || *their*. Rossetti conj.

And still the mist whose light did hang
  Among the mountains shook alway;
So that the Lady's heart beat fast,
As, half in joy and half aghast,
On those high domes her look she cast.

XII

Sudden from out that city sprung
  A light that made the earth grow red;
Two flames that each with quivering tongue
  Licked its high domes, and overhead
Among those mighty towers and fanes
Dropped fire, as a volcano rains
Its sulphurous ruin on the plains.

XIII

And hark! a rush, as if the deep
  Had burst its bonds; she looked behind,
And saw over the western steep
  A raging flood descend, and wind
Through that wide vale; she felt no fear,
But said within herself, "'Tis clear
These towers are Nature's own, and she
To save them has sent forth the sea."

XIV

And now those raging billows came
  Where that fair Lady sate, and she
Was borne towards the showering flame
  By the wild waves heaped tumultuously;
And, on a little plank, the flow
Of the whirlpool bore her to and fro.

XV

The flames were fiercely vomited
From every tower and every dome,
And dreary light did widely shed
O'er that vast flood's suspended foam,
Beneath the smoke which hung its night
On the stained cope of heaven's light.

XVI

The plank whereon that Lady sate
Was driven through the chasms, about and about,
Between the peaks so desolate
Of the drowning mountains, in and out,
As the thistle-beard on a whirlwind sails —
While the flood was filling those hollow vales.

XVII

At last her plank an eddy crossed,
And bore her to the city's wall,
Which now the flood had reached almost;
It might the stoutest heart appall
To hear the fire roar and hiss
Through the domes of those mighty palaces.

XVIII

The eddy whirled her round and round
Before a gorgeous gate, which stood
Piercing the clouds of smoke which bound
Its aëry arch with light like blood;
She looked on that gate of marble clear
With wonder that extinguished fear;

xv. 1 *flames*, Rossetti ‖ *waves*, Hunt, 1819.

XIX

For it was filled with sculptures rarest,
Of forms most beautiful and strange,
Like nothing human, but the fairest
Of winged shapes, whose legions range
Throughout the sleep of those that are,
Like this same Lady, good and fair.

XX

And as she looked, still lovelier grew
Those marble forms; — the sculptor sure
Was a strong spirit, and the hue
Of his own mind did there endure,
After the touch, whose power had braided
Such grace, was in some sad change faded.

XXI

She looked, — the flames were dim, the flood
Grew tranquil as a woodland river
Winding through hills in solitude;
Those marble shapes then seemed to quiver,
And their fair limbs to float in motion,
Like weeds unfolding in the ocean;

XXII

And their lips moved; one seemed to speak,
When suddenly the mountains cracked,
And through the chasm the flood did break
With an earth-uplifting cataract;
The statues gave a joyous scream,
And on its wings the pale thin dream
Lifted the Lady from the stream.

XXIII

The dizzy flight of that phantom pale
  Waked the fair Lady from her sleep,
And she arose, while from the veil
  Of her dark eyes the dream did creep;
And she walked about as one who knew
That sleep has sights as clear and true
As any waking eyes can view.

TO CONSTANTIA

SINGING

I

Thus to be lost and thus to sink and die,
  Perchance were death indeed! — Constantia, turn!
In thy dark eyes a power like light doth lie,
  Even though the sounds which were thy voice, which burn
Between thy lips, are laid to sleep;
  Within thy breath, and on thy hair, like odor it is yet,
And from thy touch like fire doth leap.
  Even while I write, my burning cheeks are wet —
  Alas, that the torn heart can bleed, but not forget!

II

A breathless awe, like the swift change
  Unseen but felt in youthful slumbers,

To Constantia. Published by Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

Wild, sweet, but uncommunicably strange,
Thou breathest now in fast ascending numbers.
The cope of heaven seems rent and cloven
By the enchantment of thy strain;
And on my shoulders wings are woven
To follow its sublime career
Beyond the mighty moons that wane
Upon the verge of Nature's utmost sphere,
Till the world's shadowy walls are passed and disappear.

III

Her voice is hovering o'er my soul — it lingers
O'ershadowing it with soft and lulling wings;
The blood and life within those snowy fingers
Teach witchcraft to the instrumental strings.
My brain is wild, my breath comes quick —
The blood is listening in my frame,
And thronging shadows, fast and thick,
Fall on my overflowing eyes;
My heart is quivering like a flame;
As morning dew, that in the sunbeam dies,
I am dissolved in these consuming ecstasies.

IV

I have no life, Constantia, now, but thee,
Whilst, like the world-surrounding air, thy song
Flows on, and fills all things with melody.
Now is thy voice a tempest swift and strong,
On which, like one in trance upborne,
Secure o'er rocks and waves I sweep,
Rejoicing like a cloud of morn;
Now 'tis the breath of summer night,
Which, when the starry waters sleep,

Round western isles, with incense-blossoms bright,
Lingering, suspends my soul in its voluptuous flight.

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR

I

THY country's curse is on thee, darkest crest
Of that foul, knotted, many-headed worm
Which rends our Mother's bosom! — Priestly Pest!
Masked Resurrection of a buried Form!

II

Thy country's curse is on thee! Justice sold,
Truth trampled, Nature's landmarks overthrown,
And heaps of fraud-accumulated gold,
Plead, loud as thunder, at Destruction's throne.

III

And, whilst that sure slow Angel, which aye stands
Watching the beck of Mutability,
Delays to execute her high commands,
And, though a nation weeps, spares thine and thee,

IV

Oh, let a father's curse be on thy soul,
And let a daughter's hope be on thy tomb;

To the Lord Chancellor. Published without title by Mrs. Shelley, v.-ix. and xiv., 1839[1], and with title, i.-xvi., 1839[2]. The authorities enumerated below support the text except in cases noted.

iii. 1 *sure slow*, Harvard MS., Mrs. Shelley, transcripts (Forman, Frederickson[1]) || *slow sure*, Mrs. Shelley, transcripts (Forman, Frederickson[2]), 1839[2].

iii. 1 *Angel, which aye* || cancelled, by Shelley, for *Fate which ever*, Frederickson[1].

Be both, on thy gray head, a leaden cowl
To weigh thee down to thine approaching doom!

V

I curse thee! By a parent's outraged love,
By hopes long cherished and too lately lost, —
By gentle feelings thou couldst never prove,
By griefs which thy stern nature never crossed;

VI

By those infantine smiles of happy light,
Which were a fire within a stranger's hearth,
Quenched even when kindled, — in untimely night,
Hiding the promise of a lovely birth;

VII

By those unpractised accents of young speech,
Which he who is a father thought to frame
To gentlest lore, such as the wisest teach —
Thou strike the lyre of mind! — oh, grief and shame!

VIII

By all the happy see in children's growth,
That undeveloped flower of budding years —
Sweetness and sadness interwoven both,
Source of the sweetest hopes and saddest fears —

iv. 3 *Be* || *And*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript (Forman) 1839[2].
4 *thine* || *thy*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript (Forman).
vi. 4 *promises of lovely*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1].
vii. 3 *lore* || *love*, Mrs. Shelley, transcripts (Frederickson[1,2]).
viii. 3 *intermingled*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript (Frederickson[2]).
4 *the saddest*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript (Frederickson[1]).

IX

By all the days under an hireling's care,
  Of dull constraint and bitter heaviness, —
Oh, wretched ye if ever any were, —
  Sadder than orphans, yet not fatherless!

X

By the false cant which on their innocent lips
  Must hang like poison on an opening bloom,
By the dark creeds which cover with eclipse
  Their pathway from the cradle to the tomb —

XI

By thy most impious Hell, and all its terror;
  By all the grief, the madness, and the guilt
Of thine impostures, which must be their error —
  That sand on which thy crumbling Power is
    built —

XII

By thy complicity with lust and hate —
  Thy thirst for tears — thy hunger after gold —
The ready frauds which ever on thee wait —
  The servile arts in which thou hast grown old —

ix. 1 *an* || *a*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript (Frederickson[1]), 1839[1,2].
3 *any ever*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript (Frederickson[1]).
4 *yet not fatherless* || cancelled by Shelley for *why not fatherless*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript (Frederickson[1]).

xi. crossed by Shelley and marked *dele*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript (Frederickson[1]).

xi. 1 *most*, omit, Mrs. Shelley, transcript (Frederickson[2]).
1 *terrors*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript (Frederickson[2]), 1839[2].
3 *errors*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript (Frederickson[2]), 1839[2].

xii. 4 *hast* || *art*, Mrs. Shelley, transcripts (Forman, one, Frederickson[2]).

XIII

By thy most killing sneer, and by thy smile —
By all the arts and snares of thy black den,
And — for thou canst outweep the crocodile —
By thy false tears — those millstones braining men —

XIV

By all the hate which checks a father's love —
By all the scorn which kills a father's care —
By those most impious hands which dared remove
Nature's high bounds — by thee — and by despair —

XV

Yes, the despair which bids a father groan,
And cry, "My children are no longer mine —
The blood within those veins may be mine own,
But, Tyrant, their polluted souls are thine;" —

XVI

I curse thee, though I hate thee not. — O slave!
If thou couldst quench the earth-consuming Hell
Of which thou art a demon, on thy grave
This curse should be a blessing. Fare thee well!

xiii. 2 *arts and snares*, Mrs. Shelley, transcripts (Forman, Frederickson[2]) || *snares and arts*, Harvard MS.; *snares and nets*, Mrs. Shelley, transcripts (Forman, Frederickson[1]); *acts and snares*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[2].

xiv. 2 *scorn* || *hate*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript (Frederickson[2]).

xv. 2 *cry* || *say*, transcript, (Forman, one).

3 *those* || *their*, transcripts, (Forman, one, Frederickson[1]).

4 *souls are* || *soul is*, Harvard MS., Mrs. Shelley, transcript (Forman).

TO WILLIAM SHELLEY

I

THE billows on the beach are leaping around it,
The bark is weak and frail,
The sea looks black, and the clouds that bound it
Darkly strew the gale.
Come with me, thou delightful child,
Come with me — though the wave is wild,
And the winds are loose, we must not stay,
Or the slaves of the law may rend thee away.

II

They have taken thy brother and sister dear,
They have made them unfit for thee;
They have withered the smile and dried the tear
Which should have been sacred to me.
To a blighting faith and a cause of crime
They have bound them slaves in youthly prime,
And they will curse my name and thee
Because we are fearless and free.

To William Shelley. Published without title by Mrs. Shelley, i., v., vi., 1839[1], i.-vi., 1839[2].

i. 1 *on the beach*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript, 1839[2] || omit 1839[1].
5 *thou*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1],[2] || omit, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.
8 *the*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript, 1839[1] || omit, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[2].

ii. 6 *prime*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript || *time*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[2].
8 *are fearless*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript || *fearless are*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[2].

III

Come thou, belovèd as thou art;
  Another sleepeth still
Near thy sweet mother's anxious heart,
  Which thou with joy shalt fill, —
With fairest smiles of wonder thrown
On that which is indeed our own,
And which in distant lands will be
The dearest playmate unto thee.

IV

Fear not the tyrants will rule forever,
  Or the priests of the evil faith;
They stand on the brink of that raging river
  Whose waves they have tainted with death.
It is fed from the depth of a thousand dells,
Around them it foams and rages and swells;
And their swords and their sceptres I floating see,
Like wrecks on the surge of eternity.

V

Rest, rest, and shriek not, thou gentle child!
  The rocking of the boat thou fearest,
And the cold spray and the clamor wild? —
  There sit between us two, thou dearest —
Me and thy mother — well we know
The storm at which thou tremblest so,

iii. 4 *shalt*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript || *wilt*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[2].
iv. Compare *Rosalind and Helen*, 894–901; omit, Mrs. Shelley, transcript.
v. 1 *and*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript || omit, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1,2].

With all its dark and hungry graves,
Less cruel than the savage slaves
Who hunt us o'er these sheltering waves.

VI

This hour will in thy memory
  Be a dream of days forgotten long;
We soon shall dwell by the azure sea
Of serene and golden Italy,
Or Greece, the Mother of the free;
  And I will teach thine infant tongue
To call upon those heroes old
In their own language, and will mould
Thy growing spirit in the flame
Of Grecian lore, that by such name
A patriot's birthright thou mayst claim!

ON FANNY GODWIN

Her voice did quiver as we parted,
  Yet knew I not that heart was broken
From which it came, and I departed
  Heeding not the words then spoken.
    Misery — O Misery,
    This world is all too wide for thee.

v. 9 *us*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript, 1839[1] || *thee*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[2].

vi. 1 *will*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript, 1839[2] || *sometime in*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1].

vi. 2 *long*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript || omit, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1,2].

7 *those*, Mrs. Shelley, transcript, 1839[1] || *their*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[2].

On Fanny Godwin. Published with title, *On F. G.*, by Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1].

LINES

I

That time is dead forever, child,
Drowned, frozen, dead forever!
We look on the past,
And stare aghast
At the spectres wailing, pale and ghast,
Of hopes which thou and I beguiled
To death on life's dark river.

II

The stream we gazed on then, rolled by;
Its waves are unreturning;
But we yet stand
In a lone land,
Like tombs to mark the memory
Of hopes and fears, which fade and flee
In the light of life's dim morning.

DEATH

They die — the dead return not. Misery
Sits near an open grave and calls them over,
A Youth with hoary hair and haggard eye.
They are the names of kindred, friend and lover,
Which he so feebly calls; they all are gone —
Fond wretch, all dead! those vacant names alone,

Lines. Published by Mrs. Shelley, 1824. Composed November 5.

ii. 6 *flee* || *fly*, Rossetti.

Death. Published by Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

This most familiar scene, my pain,
These tombs, — alone remain.

Misery, my sweetest friend, oh, weep no more!
Thou wilt not be consoled — I wonder not!
For I have seen thee from thy dwelling's door
Watch the calm sunset with them, and this spot
Was even as bright and calm, but transitory, —
And now thy hopes are gone, thy hair is hoary;
This most familiar scene, my pain,
These tombs, — alone remain.

SONNET. — OZYMANDIAS

I MET a traveller from an antique land
Who said: "Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
Stand in the desert. Near them, on the sand,
Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed.
And on the pedestal these words appear —
'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!'
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away."

Sonnet. — Ozymandias. Published by Hunt in The Examiner, January 11, 1818, with *Rosalind and Helen*, 1819.

LINES TO A CRITIC

I

Honey from silkworms who can gather,
Or silk from the yellow bee?
The grass may grow in winter weather
As soon as hate in me.

II

Hate men who cant, and men who pray,
And men who rail like thee;
An equal passion to repay
They are not coy like me.

III

Or seek some slave of power and gold,
To be thy dear heart's mate;
Thy love will move that bigot cold
Sooner than me thy hate.

IV

A passion like the one I prove
Cannot divided be;
I hate thy want of truth and love —
How should I then hate thee?

Lines to a Critic. Published by Hunt in The Liberal, No. III. 1823.

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1818

SONNET: TO THE NILE

Month after month the gathered rains descend
  Drenching yon secret Æthiopian dells;
  And from the desert's ice-girt pinnacles,
  Where Frost and Heat in strange embraces blend
On Atlas, fields of moist snow half depend;
  Girt there with blasts and meteors, Tempest dwells
  By Nile's aërial urn, with rapid spells
  Urging those waters to their mighty end.
O'er Egypt's land of Memory floods are level,
  And they are thine, O Nile! — and well thou knowest
  That soul-sustaining airs and blasts of evil,
And fruits and poisons, spring where'er thou flowest.
  Beware, O Man! for knowledge must to thee
  Like the great flood to Egypt ever be.

Sonnet: To the Nile. Published in The St. James's Magazine, March, 1876. Composed February 4.

5 *fields of moist snow half*, Hunt MS. || *loosened snows no more*, Hunt MS. cancelled.

PASSAGE OF THE APENNINES

Listen, listen, Mary mine,
To the whisper of the Apennine,
It bursts on the roof like the thunder's roar,
Or like the sea on a northern shore,
Heard in its raging ebb and flow
By the captives pent in the cave below.
The Apennine in the light of day
Is a mighty mountain dim and gray,
Which between the earth and sky doth lay;
But when night comes, a chaos dread
On the dim starlight then is spread,
And the Apennine walks abroad with the storm.

THE PAST

Wilt thou forget the happy hours
Which we buried in Love's sweet bowers,
Heaping over their corpses cold
Blossoms and leaves instead of mould?
  Blossoms which were the joys that fell,
    And leaves, the hopes that yet remain.

Forget the dead, the past? Oh, yet
There are ghosts that may take revenge for it;
Memories that make the heart a tomb,
Regrets which glide through the spirit's gloom,
  And with ghastly whispers tell
    That joy, once lost, is pain.

Passage of the Apennines. Published by Mrs. Shelley, 1824. Composed May 4.

The Past. Published by Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

ON A FADED VIOLET

I

THE odor from the flower is gone,
Which like thy kisses breathed on me;
The color from the flower is flown,
Which glowed of thee, and only thee!

II

A shrivelled, lifeless, vacant form,
It lies on my abandoned breast,
And mocks the heart, which yet is warm,
With cold and silent rest.

III

I weep — my tears revive it not;
I sigh — it breathes no more on me;
Its mute and uncomplaining lot
Is such as mine should be.

On a Faded Violet, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1] || *Song, On a Faded Violet*, The Literary Pocket-Book, 1821, Mrs. Shelley, 1824. *On a Dead Violet. To* ——, Shelley, Stacey MS. *On a Dead Violet*, Rossetti. Published by Hunt, in The Literary Pocket-Book, 1821. The text follows Hunt's version, which is also that of Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

i. 1 *odor* || *color*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1].
2 *kisses breathed* || *sweet eyes smiled*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1].
3 *color* || *odor*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1].
4 *glowed* || *breathed*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1].
ii. 1 *shrivelled* || *withered*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1].
4 *cold and silent* || *its cold, silent*, Stacey MS.

LINES WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGANEAN HILLS

MANY a green isle needs must be
In the deep, wide sea of misery,
Or the mariner, worn and wan,
Never thus could voyage on
Day and night, and night and day,
Drifting on his dreary way,
With the solid darkness black
Closing round his vessel's track;
Whilst above, the sunless sky,
Big with clouds, hangs heavily,
And behind, the tempest fleet
Hurries on with lightning feet,
Riving sail, and cord, and plank,
Till the ship has almost drank
Death from the o'er-brimming deep,
And sinks down, down — like that sleep
When the dreamer seems to be
Weltering through eternity;
And the dim low line before
Of a dark and distant shore
Still recedes, as ever still,
Longing with divided will
But no power to seek or shun,
He is ever drifted on
O'er the unreposing wave
To the haven of the grave.
What, if there no friends will greet?

Lines Written Among the Euganean Hills. Published with *Rosalind and Helen*, 1819. Composed at Este, October, 1818.

What, if there no heart will meet
His with love's impatient beat?
Wander wheresoe'er he may,
Can he dream before that day
To find refuge from distress
In friendship's smile, in love's caress?
Then 'twill wreak him little woe
Whether such there be or no.
Senseless is the breast, and cold,
Which relenting love would fold;
Bloodless are the veins, and chill,
Which the pulse of pain did fill;
Every little living nerve
That from bitter words did swerve
Round the tortured lips and brow,
Are like sapless leaflets now
Frozen upon December's bough.

On the beach of a northern sea
Which tempests shake eternally,
As once the wretch there lay to sleep,
Lies a solitary heap,
One white skull and seven dry bones,
On the margin of the stones,
Where a few gray rushes stand,
Boundaries of the sea and land:
Nor is heard one voice of wail
But the sea-mews, as they sail
O'er the billows of the gale;
Or the whirlwind up and down
Howling, like a slaughtered town
When a king in glory rides

43 *Is like a sapless leaflet now*, Rossetti.

Through the pomp of fratricides.
Those unburied bones around
There is many a mournful sound;
There is no lament for him,
Like a sunless vapor, dim,
Who once clothed with life and thought
What now moves nor murmurs not.

Ay, many flowering islands lie
In the waters of wide Agony.
To such a one this morn was led
My bark, by soft winds piloted.
Mid the mountains Euganean
I stood listening to the pæan
With which the legioned rooks did hail
The sun's uprise majestical;
Gathering round with wings all hoar,
Through the dewy mist they soar
Like gray shades, till the eastern heaven
Bursts, and then, as clouds of even,
Flecked with fire and azure, lie
In the unfathomable sky,
So their plumes of purple grain,
Starred with drops of golden rain,
Gleam above the sunlight woods,
As in silent multitudes
On the morning's fitful gale
Through the broken mist they sail,
And the vapors cloven and gleaming
Follow down the dark steep streaming,
Till all is bright, and clear, and still,
Round the solitary hill.

Beneath is spread like a green sea
The waveless plain of Lombardy,
Bounded by the vaporous air,
Islanded by cities fair.
Underneath day's azure eyes,
Ocean's nursling, Venice lies,
A peopled labyrinth of walls,
Amphitrite's destined halls,
Which her hoary sire now paves
With his blue and beaming waves.
Lo! the sun upsprings behind,
Broad, red, radiant, half-reclined
On the level quivering line
Of the waters crystalline;
And before that chasm of light,
As within a furnace bright,
Column, tower, and dome and spire,
Shine like obelisks of fire,
Pointing with inconstant motion
From the altar of dark ocean
To the sapphire-tinted skies;
As the flames of sacrifice
From the marble shrines did rise
As to pierce the dome of gold
Where Apollo spoke of old.

Sun-girt City! thou hast been
Ocean's child, and then his queen;
Now is come a darker day,
And thou soon must be his prey,
If the power that raised thee here
Hallow so thy watery bier.

115 *Sea-girt,* Palgrave conj.

A less drear ruin then than now,
With thy conquest-branded brow
Stooping to the slave of slaves
From thy throne among the waves,
Wilt thou be, when the sea-mew
Flies, as once before it flew,
O'er thine isles depopulate,
And all is in its ancient state,
Save where many a palace-gate
With green sea-flowers overgrown
Like a rock of ocean's own,
Topples o'er the abandoned sea
As the tides change sullenly.
The fisher on his watery way,
Wandering at the close of day,
Will spread his sail and seize his oar
Till he pass the gloomy shore,
Lest thy dead should, from their sleep
Bursting o'er the starlight deep,
Lead a rapid masque of death
O'er the waters of his path.

Those who alone thy towers behold
Quivering through aërial gold,
As I now behold them here,
Would imagine not they were
Sepulchres, where human forms,
Like pollution-nourished worms,
To the corpse of greatness cling,
Murdered, and now mouldering.
But if Freedom should awake
In her omnipotence, and shake
From the Celtic Anarch's hold

All the keys of dungeons cold,
Where a hundred cities lie
Chained like thee, ingloriously,
Thou and all thy sister band
Might adorn this sunny land,
Twining memories of old time
With new virtues more sublime.
If not, perish thou and they! —
Clouds which stain truth's rising day
By her sun consumed away —
Earth can spare ye; while like flowers,
In the waste of years and hours,
From your dust new nations spring
With more kindly blossoming.

Perish! let there only be
Floating o'er thy hearthless sea,
As the garment of thy sky
Clothes the world immortally,
One remembrance, more sublime
Than the tattered pall of time,
Which scarce hides thy visage wan; —
That a tempest-cleaving Swan
Of the songs of Albion,
Driven from his ancestral streams
By the might of evil dreams,
Found a nest in thee; and Ocean
Welcomed him with such emotion
That its joy grew his, and sprung
From his lips like music flung
O'er a mighty thunder-fit,
Chastening terror. What though yet

165 *From thy dust shall*, Locker-Lampson MS.
175 *songs* || *sons*, Forman conj.

Poesy's unfailing River,
Which through Albion winds forever
Lashing with melodious wave
Many a sacred poet's grave,
Mourn its latest nursling fled?
What though thou with all thy dead
Scarce can for this fame repay
Aught thine own? oh, rather say
Though thy sins and slaveries foul
Overcloud a sun-like soul?
As the ghost of Homer clings
Round Scamander's wasting springs;
As divinest Shakespeare's might
Fills Avon and the world with light
Like omniscient power which he
Imaged 'mid mortality;
As the love from Petrarch's urn
Yet amid yon hills doth burn,
A quenchless lamp, by which the heart
Sees things unearthly; — so thou art,
Mighty spirit! so shall be
The City that did refuge thee!

Lo, the sun floats up the sky,
Like thought-wingèd Liberty,
Till the universal light
Seems to level plain and height.
From the sea a mist has spread,
And the beams of morn lie dead
On the towers of Venice now,
Like its glory long ago.
By the skirts of that gray cloud

190 *canst*, Rossetti.

Many-domèd Padua proud
Stands, a peopled solitude,
Mid the harvest-shining plain,
Where the peasant heaps his grain
In the garner of his foe,
And the milk-white oxen slow
With the purple vintage strain,
Heaped upon the creaking wain,
That the brutal Celt may swill
Drunken sleep with savage will;
And the sickle to the sword
Lies unchanged, though many a lord,
Like a weed whose shade is poison,
Overgrows this region's foison,
Sheaves of whom are ripe to come
To destruction's harvest-home.
Men must reap the things they sow,
Force from force must ever flow,
Or worse; but 'tis a bitter woe
That love or reason cannot change
The despot's rage, the slave's revenge.

Padua, thou within whose walls
Those mute guests at festivals,
Son and Mother, Death and Sin,
Played at dice for Ezzelin,
Till Death cried, "I win, I win!"
And Sin cursed to lose the wager,
But Death promised, to assuage her,
That he would petition for
Her to be made Vice-Emperor,
When the destined years were o'er,
Over all between the Po

And the eastern Alpine snow,
Under the mighty Austrian.
Sin smiled so as Sin only can,
And since that time, ay, long before,
Both have ruled from shore to shore —
That incestuous pair, who follow
Tyrants as the sun the swallow,
As Repentance follows Crime,
And as changes follow Time.

In thine halls the lamp of learning,
Padua, now no more is burning;
Like a meteor whose wild way
Is lost over the grave of day,
It gleams betrayed and to betray.
Once remotest nations came
To adore that sacred flame,
When it lit not many a hearth
On this cold and gloomy earth;
Now new fires from antique light
Spring beneath the wide world's might;
But their spark lies dead in thee,
Trampled out by tyranny.
As the Norway woodman quells,
In the depth of piny dells,
One light flame among the brakes,
While the boundless forest shakes,
And its mighty trunks are torn
By the fire thus lowly born; —
The spark beneath his feet is dead,
He starts to see the flames it fed
Howling through the darkened sky
With myriad tongues victoriously,

And sinks down in fear; — so thou,
O Tyranny! beholdest now
Light around thee, and thou hearest
The loud flames ascend, and fearest.
Grovel on the earth! ay, hide
In the dust thy purple pride!

Noon descends around me now.
'Tis the noon of autumn's glow,
When a soft and purple mist,
Like a vaporous amethyst,
Or an air-dissolvèd star
Mingling light and fragrance, far
From the curved horizon's bound
To the point of heaven's profound
Fills the overflowing sky.
And the plains that silent lie
Underneath; the leaves unsodden
Where the infant frost has trodden
With his morning-wingèd feet,
Whose bright print is gleaming yet;
And the red and golden vines,
Piercing with their trellised lines
The rough, dark-skirted wilderness;
The dun and bladed grass no less,
Pointing from this hoary tower
In the windless air; the flower
Glimmering at my feet; the line
Of the olive-sandalled Apennine
In the south dimly islanded;
And the Alps, whose snows are spread
High between the clouds and sun;
And of living things each one;

And my spirit, which so long
Darkened this swift stream of song, —
Interpenetrated lie
By the glory of the sky:
Be it love, light, harmony,
Odor, or the soul of all
Which from heaven like dew doth fall,
Or the mind which feeds this verse
Peopling the lone universe.

Noon descends, and after noon
Autumn's evening meets me soon,
Leading the infantine moon
And that one star, which to her
Almost seems to minister
Half the crimson light she brings
From the sunset's radiant springs;
And the soft dreams of the morn
(Which like wingèd winds had borne
To that silent isle, which lies
Mid remembered agonies,
The frail bark of this lone being)
Pass, to other sufferers fleeing,
And its ancient pilot, Pain,
Sits beside the helm again.

Other flowering isles must be
In the sea of life and agony;
Other spirits float and flee
O'er that gulf: even now, perhaps,
On some rock the wild wave wraps,
With folding wings they waiting sit
For my bark, to pilot it

To some calm and blooming cove,
Where for me, and those I love,
May a windless bower be built,
Far from passion, pain, and guilt,
In a dell mid lawny hills,
Which the wild sea-murmur fills,
And soft sunshine, and the sound
Of old forests echoing round,
And the light and smell divine
Of all flowers that breathe and shine.
We may live so happy there,
That the spirits of the air,
Envying us, may even entice
To our healing paradise
The polluting multitude;
But their rage would be subdued
By that clime divine and calm,
And the winds whose wings rain balm
On the uplifted soul, and leaves
Under which the bright sea heaves;
While each breathless interval
In their whisperings musical
The inspired soul supplies
With its own deep melodies,
And the love which heals all strife,
Circling, like the breath of life,
All things in that sweet abode
With its own mild brotherhood.
They, not it, would change; and soon
Every sprite beneath the moon
Would repent its envy vain,
And the earth grow young again.

INVOCATION TO MISERY

I

Come, be happy! — sit near me,
Shadow-vested Misery;
Coy, unwilling, silent bride,
Mourning in thy robe of pride,
Desolation — deified!

II

Come, be happy! — sit near me.
Sad as I may seem to thee,
I am happier far than thou,
Lady, whose imperial brow
Is endiademed with woe.

III

Misery! we have known each other,
Like a sister and a brother
Living in the same lone home,
Many years — we must live some
Hours or ages yet to come.

IV

'Tis an evil lot, and yet
Let us make the best of it;
If love can live when pleasure dies,

Invocation to Misery, Medwin, 1832 || *Misery, A Fragment*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1]. Published by Medwin, The Athenæum, September 8, 1832.

i. 1 *near*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1] || *by*, Medwin, 1832.

iii. 5 *Hours or*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1] || *Years and*, Medwin, 1832.

iv. 2 *best*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1] || *most*, Medwin, 1832.

We two will love, till in our eyes
This heart's Hell seem Paradise.

V

Come, be happy! — lie thee down
On the fresh grass newly mown,
Where the grasshopper doth sing
Merrily — one joyous thing
In a world of sorrowing

VI

There our tent shall be the willow,
And mine arm shall be thy pillow;
Sounds and odors, sorrowful
Because they once were sweet, shall lull
Us to slumber, deep and dull.

VII

Ha! thy frozen pulses flutter
With a love thou darest not utter.
Thou art murmuring — thou art weeping —
Is thine icy bosom leaping
While my burning heart lies sleeping?

VIII

Kiss me; — oh! thy lips are cold;
Round my neck thine arms enfold —
They are soft, but chill and dead;

iv. 4 *We two will*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1] || *We will*, Medwin, 1832.
vi. 2 *mine arm shall be thy*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1] || *thine arm shall be my*, Medwin, 1832.
vii. 3 asterisks, Medwin, 1832.
4, 5: —

> Thou art murmuring, thou art weeping,
> Whilst my burning bosom's leaping.
> Medwin, 1832.

And thy tears upon my head
Burn like points of frozen lead.

IX

Hasten to the bridal bed —
Underneath the grave 'tis spread:
In darkness may our love be hid,
Oblivion be our coverlid —
We may rest, and none forbid.

X

Clasp me, till our hearts be grown
Like two shadows into one;
Till this dreadful transport may
Like a vapor fade away
In the sleep that lasts alway.

XI

We may dream, in that long sleep,
That we are not those who weep;
E'en as Pleasure dreams of thee,
Life-deserting Misery,
Thou mayst dream of her with me.

XII

Let us laugh, and make our mirth,
At the shadows of the earth,
As dogs bay the moonlight clouds,
Which, like spectres wrapped in shrouds,
Pass o'er night in multitudes.

viii. 5 *frozen* || *molten*, Forman conj.

x. 2 *shadows*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1] || *lovers*, Medwin, 1832, Boscombe MS.

xii. 4 *That*, Medwin, 1832.

XIII

All the wide world beside us
Show like multitudinous
Puppets passing from a scene;
What but mockery can they mean,
Where I am — where thou hast been?

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES

I

THE sun is warm, the sky is clear,
The waves are dancing fast and bright;
Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
The purple noon's transparent might;
The breath of the moist earth is light
Around its unexpanded buds;
Like many a voice of one delight,
The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
The City's voice itself is soft like Solitude's.

xiii. 2 *Show*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1] || *Are*, Medwin, 1832.
3 *Puppets passing*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1] || *Shadows shifting*, Medwin, 1832.
xiii. 4, 5, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1] ||

> What but mockery may they mean?
> Where am I? — Where thou hast been.
>
> Medwin, 1832.

Stanzas. Published by Mrs. Shelley, 1824. Composed in December.
i. 4 *might*, Boscombe MS. || *light*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.
5 Benbow, 1826, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1]; omit, Mrs. Shelley, 1824; *moist earth*, Boscombe MS. || *moist air*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1]; *west wind*, Medwin, 1847.

II

I see the Deep's untrampled floor
With green and purple sea-weeds strown;
I see the waves upon the shore,
Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown;
I sit upon the sands alone —
The lightning of the noontide ocean
Is flashing round me, and a tone
Arises from its measured motion,
How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

III

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
Nor peace within nor calm around,
Nor that content surpassing wealth
The sage in meditation found,
And walked with inward glory crowned —
Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
Others I see whom these surround —
Smiling they live, and call life pleasure; —
To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

IV

Yet now despair itself is mild,
Even as the winds and waters are;
I could lie down like a tired child,
And weep away the life of care
Which I have borne and yet must bear,

ii. 8 *measured*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *mingled*, Medwin, 1847.
9 *did any heart now*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *if any heart could*, Medwin, 1847.
iv. 4 *the*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *this*, Medwin, 1847.

Till death like sleep might steal on me,
And I might feel in the warm air
My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

V

Some might lament that I were cold,
As I when this sweet day is gone,
Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
Insults with this untimely moan;
They might lament — for I am one
Whom men love not, — and yet regret,
Unlike this day, which, when the sun
Shall on its stainless glory set,
Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet.

SONNET

Lift not the painted veil which those who live
Call Life; though unreal shapes be pictured there,
And it but mimic all we would believe
With colors idly spread, — behind, lurk Fear
And Hope, twin Destinies, who ever weave
Their shadows o'er the chasm sightless and drear.
I knew one who had lifted it — he sought,
For his lost heart was tender, things to love,

iv. 9 *dying*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824 || *outworn*, Medwin, 1847.
Sonnet. Published by Mrs. Shelley, 1824.
6 Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1] || *The shadows, which the world calls substance, there*, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.
7 *had*, Mrs. Shelley, 1839[1] || omit, Mrs. Shelley, 1824.

But found them not, alas! nor was there aught
The world contains the which he could approve.
Through the unheeding many he did move,
A splendor among shadows, a bright blot
Upon this gloomy scene, a Spirit that strove
For truth, and like the Preacher found it not.

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